ABOUT THE BOOK

There is perhaps no more potent symbol of the samurai era than the sword. By the seventeenth century in Japan, the art of swordsmanship had begun to take on an almost cult-like popularity. Swordsmanship was more than a mastery of technique; it was a path toward self-mastery. *The Swordsman's Handbook* is the definitive collection of writings by men who saw the study of swordsmanship not only as essential to life and death, but as something that transcended life and death as well. Their teaching, that dealing with conflict is an art that requires grace and courage, speaks to us today with surprising immediacy and relevance. Included in this collection are writings by Kotada Yahei Toshitada, Takuan Soho, Yagyu Munenori, Miyamoto Musashi, Matsura Seizan, Issai Chozanshi, and Yamaoka Tesshu.

WILLIAM SCOTT WILSON is the foremost translator into English of traditional Japanese texts on samurai culture. He received BA degrees from Dartmouth College and the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies, and an MA in Japanese literary studies from the University of Washington. His best-selling books include *The Book of Five Rings*, *The Unfettered Mind*, and *The Lone Samurai*, a biography of Miyamoto Musashi.

Sign up to receive news and special offers from Shambhala Publications.

Or visit us online to sign up at shambhala.com/eshambhala.

“No obstruction to expression.” (foreground)

“Presumably, as a martial artist, I do not fight for gain or loss, am not concerned with strength or weakness, and neither advance a step nor retreat a step. The enemy does not see me. I do not see the enemy. Penetrating to a place where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where Yin and Yang have not yet arrived, I quickly and necessarily gain effect.”

—Takuan Soho (background)

The Swordsman's Handbook
Samurai Teachings on the Path of the Sword

Translated and Edited by *William Scott Wilson*

Shambhala · boston & london · 2014

Shambhala Publications, Inc.
Horticultural Hall
300 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
www.shambhala.com

© 2014 by William Scott Wilson
Frontispiece calligraphy by Irene Hu. Reproduced with permission.

Cover art: Nitta Yoshisada (1301–1338) dedicates his sword to the Dragon King of the Sea before taking Kamakura, from the woodblock print series *100 Aspects of the Moon* by Yoshitoshi, 1887; collection of John Stevenson
Cover design by Daniel Urban-Brown

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

The swordsman's handbook: samurai teachings on the path of the sword / translated and edited by William Scott Wilson.—First Edition.
pages cm
eISBN 978-0-8348-2973-2
ISBN 978-1-61180-062-3 (paperback)
1. Swordplay—Japan—Early works to 1800. 2. Samurai—Japan—Early works to 1800. I. Wilson, William Scott, 1944–, translator, editor.
GV1150.S965 2014
796.860952—dc23
2013029633

HB

Dedicated to Frank Nieves Sensei

The flower is the mind;
The seed is technique

花は心
種は熊

Zeami Motokiyo

Contents

Publisher's Note
Preface
Introduction

1. Ito Ittosai Kagehisa
2. Takuan Soho
3. Yagyu Munenori
4. Miyamoto Musashi
5. Iba Zesuiken Hideaki
6. Issai Chozanshi
7. Yamaoka Tesshu

Afterword
Notes
Bibliography
E-mail Sign-Up

Publisher's Note

This book contains special characters. If you encounter difficulty displaying these characters, please set your e-reader device to publisher defaults (if available) or to an alternate font.

Preface

刀を常に心の鞘に納め礼の帯に手挟む
Always place the sword in the sheath of the mind,
and wear it in the sash of etiquette.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT the art of swordsmanship—whether it be *kendo* or *iaido*—that makes it the popular practice that it is, not only in nearly every small village in Japan but in many cities in the United States and around the world? Unlike karate, judo, or aikido, it is not immediately practical for self-defense. As opposed to marksmanship, the weapon it uses cannot be learned in a few weeks, months, or even years and cannot be carried concealed on the street for one's own protection.[1] Yet there is a grace, dignity, and etiquette to swordsmanship, accompanied by techniques that demand both mindfulness and physical coordination, that seem to manifest the immediacy of the human condition—both physical and spiritual. And this while handling a blade that symbolizes the fine line between existence and non-existence.

Here is a story.

When Nennami Jion was only five years old, his father, Soma Jirozaemon Tadashige, the lord of the Soma fief in Oshu was assassinated, probably by a neighboring hostile landed family, and the boy fled on the back of his wet nurse to Bushu.[2] Entering a Buddhist monastery to avoid being killed himself, he changed his given name, Soma Jiro Yoshimoto, to one more appropriate to a priest, Nennami.

Nennami was given permission to study under the auspices of an Abbot Yugyo, but even as the good abbot's young disciple, he harbored only one thought—*ichi nen* (念)—which was to someday take revenge on his father's enemy. To that end, whenever he was out of sight of the other monks and priests, he began to train himself in swordsmanship on his own.

From the surprisingly young age of ten, however, he began to travel the country on foot, passing through province after province, learning swordsmanship wherever he could. For a time, he stayed at Mount Kurama—home of the mysterious *tengu*—on the outskirts of Kyoto, and

studied from a man whom he described as “different and strange.” He then turned his steps toward Soshu,[3] where he received secret traditions of the martial arts from another unconventional swordsman, a venerable old priest at the Jufukuji Temple in Kamakura.[4] Finally, in 1368, at the age of seventeen, Nennami journeyed to Kyushu in the far southwest and came to his deepest understanding of swordsmanship in a dream while living in a sea-eroded cave near the Udo Shrine.

At the age of eighteen, Nennami felt ready. Leaving the priesthood, he found his father’s assassin, took quick revenge, and returned to his hometown, where he went through his coming-of-age ceremony. After three years of mourning for his father, he once again became a Zen priest, took the name Jion, and is thought to have spent the next thirty-five years once again traveling through the provinces, but this time as a master swordsman of his own style, the Nen-ryu (念流).

Toward the age of fifty-eight, Nennami felt that age was catching up with him, and in May of 1408, he settled down in the village of Namiai in Shinshu,[5] established the Chofukuji Temple, and ended his days in daily worship of Marishiten, protector of warriors. This Marishiten was venerated as a deity that would transport the warrior, through compassion and respect for others, to a higher spiritual level, where victory and defeat, life and death, were unimportant. In this way, the warrior—although necessarily involved in war and bloodshed—achieved, at once, both selflessness and a mastery of self.

Nennami Jion, whose personal history is not particularly unique among the early sword masters, is regarded as having been the very first of a remarkable number of the Japanese great swordsmen, or *kengo* (剣豪),[6] and his style, the Nen-ryu, has left its mark, not only on the Maniwa Nen-ryu, which is still practiced today, but on other important styles such as the Chujo-ryu and the Itto-ryu. Nennami, however, taught an art that is based ultimately on the intuitive grasp of repeated techniques, and he was highly influenced by Zen Buddhism—as were many of the sword masters who came after him. This presented certain problems of communication.

The repeated techniques, for example, used in teaching swordsmanship are patterns of movement with the feet and sword that are exercised over and over again until they are understood, not only by muscle memory, but far deeper in the student’s subconscious. Thus, they are first memorized, and then learned—or perhaps better said, absorbed—until they can be forgotten and pushed out of conscious movement. Once this level is achieved, the student can move freely and intuitively. The technique is his, but not rigidly so. It is this level, however, that cannot be taught or transmitted, and at which techniques may take

flight.

In the same way, in Zen, transmission of enlightenment is said to be *isshin denshin* (一心伝心), or transmission from mind to mind, and is not to depend on written documents. What is taught cannot be put into words, and concepts expressed through words may only get in the way. In other words, our deepest perceptions and understandings can only be received or shared with the like-minded. Here is something else:

> When the warrior Hosokawa Shigeyuki (1434–1511) retired as daimyo of Sanuki Province, he became a Zen priest. When Osen Kaisan (1429–1493), a scholar-monk, visited Shigeyuki, the aging warrior told the monk that he wished to show him a landscape that he himself had painted on a recent trip to Kumano and other scenic spots on the Kii Peninsula. When the scroll was opened, there was nothing but a blank sheet of paper. The monk, struck by the emptiness of the painting, offered these words of praise:
>
> Your brush is as tall as Mount Sumeru,
> Black ink large enough to exhaust the great earth;
> The white paper as vast as the void that swallows up
> all illusions.

Because of this—the difficulty of putting words or ink to an intuitive inspiration (as vast as the void that swallows up all illusions), coupled with the relatively uneducated level of some of the early sword masters—much of what is left to us from the early schools such as Jion's is either in the form of long lists of the names of techniques, vague sayings, or poems hinting at concepts that might not be well-expressed otherwise.[7] Examples of the latter from the Itto-ryu are the following:

> 執行には足をは留めす身を守れ気を静にて業ははけしく
> When taking action
> do not restrict your feet,
> but mind your body.
> With ch'i at peace,
> vigorously apply your technique.
>
> 剣術は坂へ車を押す如くゆるせはもとる元の麓へ
> Swordsmanship
> is like pushing a cart
> up a hill.
> If you waver once, the cart returns
> to the bottom of the slope.

For all of the above reasons, although the style may still exist, it is difficult to know in many cases what the founder's original intentions were, how he expressed himself to his students, or if the style has indeed changed over the centuries. What prompts or handbooks still exist may mean very little to the uninitiated and sometimes even to the current teacher himself.

The entries included in this collection of samurai teachings on swordsmanship are of a very different stripe. Although the same struggle for clarity is necessarily apparent, and lists are included as a matter of course, the men who wrote these treatises—Kotoda Yahei Toshitada (fl. 1653), Takuan Soho (1573–1645), Yagyu Munenori (1571–1646), Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1646), Joseishi Matsura Seizan (1760–1841), Issai Chozanshi (1659–1741), and Yamaoka Tesshu (1836–1888)—were not only highly literate, but were literary men as well. Nevertheless, they came from very different walks of life: one was a renowned scholar as well as a swordsman; another was a lifelong Zen Buddhist priest who was probably just as happy experimenting in the kitchen as grasping a wooden sword in the dojo; yet another was a dedicated and confirmed *ronin*, a master painter and sculptor; and yet another spent much of his life dealing with politics. Their works are just as different in style as are their lives, but are all thoughtful, to the point, in some cases humorous and fanciful, but never frustratingly vague. These were men who could and wanted to write well. Why this change?

In short, by the seventeenth century, the art of swordsmanship had begun to take on almost a cult popularity, and students began to be attracted to masters and their dojos in ever-increasing numbers. In contrast to Ito Ittosai Kagehisa, who had only two disciples when he decided to retire into the priesthood, and Nennami Jion, who had fourteen, the Yagyu dojos were filled with students, Matsura Seizan was a member of a dojo that would become one of the most popular in the capital of Edo, and Yamaoka Tesshu, despite his strict teaching methods, was never without applicants. It is true that at the end of Musashi's life, he had only a few disciples, but his reputation was already such that he likely felt it necessary to set the record straight—not only for his disciples but for posterity as well. Add to this that the times had changed from those of chaos and war to relative peace and prosperity, and this provided a certain leisure, for those who wished, to write these treatises.

Regardless of their reasons for writing down these words, however, all of these men saw the study of swordsmanship as essential to life and death—but as transcendent of life and death, as well. All of them taught that dealing with conflict could be a matter of art, grace, and courage;

and in this way, their words speak to us with surprising immediacy.

It has been my extreme good fortune to have had the opportunity to work on these materials for nearly thirty years. At times, the work has gone unexpectedly smoothly; at times, I have nearly pulled out what is left of my hair in frustration. But each and every book has been, again, a remarkable opportunity, and has always made me sit up a little straighter in my chair as I worked. Moreover, any translator, I think, will agree that, in working with a writer's original choice of words, phrasing, quirks of style, and even what has not been said, the translator is given the fortuitous chance to know more intimately not only what has been written—but a good deal of the writer himself. In this way, the work has involved the meeting with a number of remarkable men.

But a work does not stop with the completion of the translation, and a book is not produced with the last closing of a dictionary. Thus, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the many people who have labored so hard to put these translations into print, or who have encouraged me along the way when the going got rough. To my former editors at Kodansha International who initially welcomed me on board, Homer Neal, Kuramochi Tetsuo, Barry Lancet, Elizabeth Floyd, and Ginny Tapley; to my ever-patient and tireless editors at Shambhala Publications, Beth Frankl and John Golebiewski; to my friends and morale providers, Thomas Levidiotis, Ichikawa Takashi, Kate Barnes, Gary Haskins, Jim Brems, John Siscoe, Jack Whisler, Dr. Laura Nenzi, Dr. Daniel Medvedov, Dr. Justin Newman, and Robin D. Gill (to name only a few); to Frank Nieves Sensei, who demonstrates in the dojo what cannot be written in books, and to all my *sempai* at the South Florida Kendo Club; to my wife, muse, and wordsmith, Emily; and to my late professors, Hiraga Noburu and Dr. Richard McKinnon, whose humor, erudition, and encouragement can never be repaid.

Although it is the translator's name that goes on the cover when a book is finally published, it is certainly not his work alone. Any and all mistakes, however, are my own.

Introduction

Terms

In the final lines of his famous book the *Analects*, the fifth-century B.C.E. philosopher Chung-ni (whom we know as Confucius) states that

> 不知言、無以知人也
> If you do not understand words,
> you will not understand men.

Chung-ni, who practiced archery and likely other martial arts, believed that no discussion would go well without the clarification of terms, which he called "the rectification of names." Thus we start with the definition of a few of the seminal terms that underline the writings included in this anthology. And, for the martial arts, we begin at the beginning.

Bu (武): Martial or military affairs, the stem word for *bushido*, *budo*, *bujutsu*, and so forth. Etymologically, the Chinese character is broken down into two radicals: 止, to "stop," and an abbreviated form of 戈, "spear." The *Shuo wen*, the earliest Chinese dictionary, gives this definition:

> Bu consists of subduing the weapon, and therefore stopping the spear.

Another early Chinese source, the *Tso chuan,* continues:

> *Bu* prohibits violence and subdues weapons . . . it puts the people at peace, and harmonizes the masses.

Other sources, however, identify the earlier meaning of "to stop" as "to step forward," and consider *bu* to mean "taking up the spear and advancing forward." In this way, *bu* is often contrasted or paired with *bun* (文), the literary, or arts of culture and peace, and since ancient times in China, Korea, and Japan, the true gentleman is considered a

man who has *bu* in one hand and *bun* in the other. Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623), a Japanese warlord, expressed it this way:

> *Bu* and *bun* are like the two wheels of a cart which, lacking one, will have difficulty in standing.

Finally, *bu* carries a strong sense of interior essence or substance, while *bun* exemplifies exterior pattern or beauty. This is expressed with the character 斌, a combination of the two, and indicating a condition of balance and harmony. All of these nuances should be kept in mind as the reader goes through these works, for while the martial would seem to be the mirror image of the literary and cultural, the two are perhaps better considered to be the opposite sides of a coin: inseparable and inclusive.

Bujutsu (武術): Martial techniques. The term *jutsu* means technique, and *bujutsu* are the techniques that are the building blocks of any style in any martial art. They are elements of the *kata*, and are the *kata* themselves: the single stroke of a sword, or the series of strokes in which it is used. Thus you have *kenjutsu* or *tojutsu*, sword technique; *shajutsu*, archery technique; *bajutsu*, riding technique; or *iaijutsu*, drawing-the-sword technique. It should be emphasized, however, that these are all matters of skill and efficiency in combat, and, that in this narrow sense, no values are attributed to them other than defeating the opponent and escaping injury oneself.

Anciently, the character for *jutsu* meant an incantation repeated at a crossroads to ensure safety in travel; later, it meant the long and winding path that one followed to a destination. Seen in this light, the study and practice of technique would seem something more than just the physical actions involved. In the *Analects*, Chung-ni said,

> 射不主皮
> In archery, we do not make the target our main concern.

Expanding on this, in the *Lieh Tzu*, we find this story:

> Lieh Yu-k'ou was showing off his skills at archery to Pai-hun Wu-jen. He drew his bow to full length and, with a bowl of water placed on his left elbow, released an arrow. As the arrow flew, he fitted another arrow and released it, and then yet another. During this time, he stood as still as a statue, and spilled not a drop of water. Pai-hun Wu-jen said, "This is archery in which you shoot. It is not archery in which you do not shoot. Let's climb a mountain,

walk onto a teetering rock overlooking a pool a hundred fathoms deep, and see if you can still shoot." With that, Pai-hun Wu-jen scaled a high mountain, strode over to an unstable rock overlooking a pool a hundred fathoms deep, and backed up until his heels hung over the edge. He then beckoned Yu-k'ou to approach. Yu-k'ou lay down on the ground, with sweat flowing down to the bottoms of his feet, and crawled over.

Pai-hun Wu-jen said,

> Now the man who has arrived[1]
> Can look right up at the blue sky,
> Dive down into the Yellow Springs[2] below,
> Be shaken and battered in the eight directions,
> But his spirit and ch'i will not change.

Then he looked at Lieh Yu-k'ou and said, "Now you shrink in fear and blink your eyes. Are you not in danger within?

Bugei (武芸): Martial art. In the *Honcho bugei shoden*, a series of biographies of the founders of the martial arts styles published in 1716, the martial arts are divided into eight classifications: *shikke* (諸禮), etiquette; *shajutsu* (射術), archery techniques; *bajutsu* (馬術), riding techniques; *tojutsu* (刀術), sword techniques; *sojutsu* (槍術), spear techniques; *hojutsu* (砲術), gunnery techniques; *shogusoku* (小具足), capturing techniques; and *jujutsu* (柔術), or jujitsu. "Art" in this sense seems to be synonymous with "technique," but the word *gei* is applied to the fine arts as well, and a *bugeisha* (武芸者), or martial artist, was and is considered as such; he or she is not simply a technician. Consider the fact that the archaic Chinese character for *gei* depicted a man kneeling down and planting a tree or seedling with both hands, and that it was applied to the field of governance as well as to agriculture. In the early stages of civilization, both agriculture and administration had to be raised to the level of an art; technique was not enough.

Chung-ni seems to have seen *gei* in a more deeply human way, and he considered it fundamental to culture, education, and refinement. Again, in the *Analects*, he says,

> If you aim toward the Way, make virtue your foundation; if you would draw close to human-heartedness, spend your time with the arts.

Heiho[3] (兵法): Nearly synonymous with *bugei*. The word *hei* can mean

weapon, soldier, army, warfare, or strategy; and its original character depicts two hands holding an ax. In classical China, the term was not considered a happy one. In a document titled the *Kuo yu yueh yu*, it states,

> Heroism is a contrary virtue; weapons are instruments of bad omen; conflict is the last resort of things.

In the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu repeats,

> Weapons are instruments of bad omen.

And the *Tso chuan* declares that

> Weapons are just like fire; if you do not control them, they will ignite of their own accord.

Ho means law, code, or method—in ancient times, a weir regulating a stream—and so *heiho*, the law of weapons or military strategy, has come to mean either simply tactics or strategy or, by extension, the martial arts. In the above-mentioned *Honcho bugei shoden*, it was used mostly to classify theories of battle techniques for military operations involving a number of warriors, but prior to that time it meant both the martial arts in general and swordsmanship in particular. Yagyu Munenori, for example, writes in the *Heiho kadensho* that *heiho* was used both for one-on-one matches and in a larger sense:

> When looking at the situation of the state, it [*heiho*] is in knowing its tendency toward chaos, and guiding the state while it has still not yet fallen into such a condition.

Musashi, on the other hand, considered *heiho* as referring to tactics either for one-on-one conflicts or for conflicts involving large numbers of troops, and throughout the *Gorin no sho*, he comments on the parallels of swordsmanship and general tactics. In discussing the five different stances of holding a sword, for example, he states,

> Look at the martial arts in terms of large armies. The Middle Stance [of holding a sword: the *chudan*] is the seat of the commanding general, and the four other stances follow after him. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Nevertheless, Munenori and Musashi were unique in broadening this meaning of *heiho* during their time,[4] and this was because they had understood the fundamental principles of warfare and governing

through their own intense study of swordsmanship. Generally speaking, however, a *bugeisha* and *heihosha* were considered one and the same.

Budo (武道): The Way of the martial. The key element to be considered here is the character *do*: a way, a path, a street, or a Way. Made up of the radicals for "head" and "movement," it indicates an intelligent way of moving along—not necessarily to a destination, but rather step by step. The Taoists used this term to indicate an intuitive Way of life, the early Zen Buddhists as the Dharma, the Confucians as a Way chartered by the ancients. Attached to the character *bu*, it is understood to mean the essential elements or doctrines added to bugei. Thus, *budo* is a teaching or practice—something to mold or evolve the human being, rather than a skill or technique used simply to cut down an opponent. Stated in this way, it can be a practice, philosophy, a Way of life, or even a religion depending on the individual's depth of understanding and commitment.

Do, then, points to the essential spiritual elements of martial techniques, and, as kendo, judo, aikido and so forth, it demands a far more thoughtful and meditative approach to whatever martial art is being studied. This quality has been emphasized since the early twentieth century, when the terms *bujutsu* and *bugei* began to fall into disuse.

Finally, it should be noted that the term *bushido* (武士道), literally meaning "the Way of the educated or gentleman warrior," has become almost synonymous with *budo*, and indeed, the same studies are essential to both. Along with the natural emphasis on the martial arts, bushido stresses etiquette, loyalty, filial piety, courage, purity of mind, standing by one's word, and compassion—none of which would be excluded from the practice of budo. Even the signal line from the most famous treatise on bushido, the *Hagakure*,

> 武士道といふは死ぬことと見つけたり
> The Way of bushido is found in death

will not be found to be inimical to the study of skills necessary to overcome an opponent. For, as a number of writers in this anthology have concluded, and as Pai-hun Wu-jen pointed out to Lieh Yu-k'ou, the demise of the ego is a necessary precondition to the release of an arrow or the thrust of a sword.

The Sword and Swordsmanship

How, then, are we to think of *bu*? Stopping the spear; stopping the

aggression of others; and stopping our own. This was perhaps the evolution of swordsmanship from the earliest days in Japan right up to the present.

Beginnings: The Sword

In an archeological site in near Fukuoka, Japan, human bones, thought to be thoracic vertebrae, were found still pierced by the pointed end of a stone sword. The site was dated as from the middle of the Yayoi period (200 B.C.E.–250 B.C.E.), and the bones thought to have been those of a soldier stabbed in the back. It is interesting to note that—at this location as well as at others—only the tips of the swords were found. These swords were made of polished stone and seemed not to have had sharp edges for cutting. "Technique," then, would have consisted almost solely in stabbing—the weapon itself offering no other choice.

By the late Yayoi sword production became more sophisticated; both bronze and iron implements were brought to Japan from China and Korea, and by the late third to fourth centuries C.E. swords were being cast from iron. Still, the iron was of poor quality; the swords had two edges for the most part, but stabbing rather than cutting was thought to have remained the central art.

The swords of the following Kofun period (late fourth to late fifth centuries), however, came with two revolutionary improvements: (1) the sword itself now had but a single sharp edge, reducing the danger of the bearer cutting himself; and (2) the blade was being constructed with a wedge-like shape, allowing it to receive a blow without the danger of being broken.

Finally, during the Heian period (794–1185), the ridge on the side of the blade and the curvature of the sword were incorporated into the structure, further removing the danger of a man injuring himself. Now, with the forging techniques that had gradually improved over the preceding centuries, chances increased that if a soldier returned home from a conflict, his sword would return intact as well. Improvements in forging would continue, and changes in size, thickness, and decor would progress, but this was, practically speaking, the Japanese sword.

Beginnings: The Styles

In the seventh century, north of Tokyo, there was a Shinto priest of the Kashima Grand Shrine, Kunikazu (or Kuninazu) no Mabito, who learned swordsmanship from Takemikazuchi, the principle god worshipped at the shrine. This Takemikazuchi was a god of great martial abilities, and when called upon to pacify unruly tribes in Japan, he simply stated,

> Even if I go not, I can send down my sword [the Futsu no Mitama], with which I subdued the land, upon which the country will of its own accord become peaceful.[5]

After considerable study and prayer, Kunikazu taught the art he had learned from the deity, and this, passed on through the generations by the shrine officials, became the foundation of the Seven Styles of Kashima, also called the Seven Styles of the Kanto. Descendents of these styles include Jion's Nen-ryu as well as the Jigen-ryu, the Chujo-ryu, the Itto-ryu, the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu, the Chujo-ryu, and the Gan-ryu[6]. These styles—and others that have their roots in Kashima—represent the Eastern tradition of Japanese swordsmanship.

Some five hundred years later, Kiichi Hogen, a master of the esoteric study of yin and yang, somehow came by the secrets of swordsmanship considered the Western tradition of that art. In the *Honcho bugei shoden*, we find this:

> According to ancient tradition . . . in the reign of Emperor Daigo (897–930), Oe Koretoki went to T'ang China and came back with *The Six Strategies*, *The Three Tactics,* and other books on the military arts, translated them into Japanese, bound them into one hundred and twenty volumes as the *Kin'etsu shu*, and treasured them highly. During the reign of the emperor Go-Shirakawa (1155–1158), Kiichi Hogen obtained this book, and Minamoto Yoshitsune was able to copy it secretly through the good offices of Hogen's daughter.

Hogen lived at the Ichijo Canal in Kyoto but is strongly connected to Mount Kurama on the outskirts of that city, a steep and mysterious mountain that was and still is considered to be the home of the tengu, legendary half bird–half man creatures known for their skills at swordsmanship. Hogen[7] is said to have imparted the truly secret skills of the sword only to the "Eight Priests of Kurama"—sometimes thought to have been tengu themselves—and it was with these that the Eight Schools of Kyoto began. Those schools connected to this Western tradition include the Yoshioka-ryu,[8] the Togun-ryu, the Shinto Munen-ryu, the Shingyoto-ryu, and the Mugai-ryu. Miyamoto Musashi is said to have based the principles of his style, the Niten-ichi-ryu, on the principles of this tradition as well.

From these early origins, the techniques of *bujutsu* advanced at an uneven pace.

The battles that took place from the latter half of the Heian period and the early Kamakura period, for example, were mainly fought on horseback using bows and arrows. This was the representative art of the warrior at this time, and the word defining a family of good warrior

stock was *kyuba no ie* (弓馬の家), "a house of bow and horse." The warriors did wear swords at their side—blade down—but the combination of heavy protective armor and the fact that they were mounted made these weapons difficult to wield. Mostly they were used in the hand-to-hand combat that took place after the main battle was over, often simply stabbing the defeated enemy with a *coup de grace*.

With the Mongol invasion of 1274, however, the situation changed. Even with their heavy bows and armor, the Japanese warriors were no match for the Chinese crossbows and missile-projecting machines, and the situation was grim. Thanks to a nighttime arrival of a typhoon—the famous *kamikaze*, or divine wind—however, the Japanese were able to deliver a night attack on the Chinese, who had ensconced themselves along the coast and were unable to flee. This was achieved with hand-to-hand fighting, using a much lighter armor, and troops on foot in close formation. The main weapon used was the sword. In the near chaos that ensued, many of the enemy who were able to escape the slaughter on land boarded ships that were only to be sunk in the wind and rain. The second invasion in 1281 ended with similar results. The Mongol invasions were finished, and the Japanese sword was now the valued weapon of choice.

It was during this time that sword smiths began to insert a soft core of low-carbon steel into the blade, making the swords less brittle and thus even less likely to break on contact with other swords. Experiments were also made in shortening, thickening, and widening the blade, resulting in a number of different types of swords. Eventually, these changes would lead to the development of different styles of swordsmanship as well.

In this way, the sword—which had been used only as a secondary measure—was increasingly favored as a weapon, and it was soon after this period when men like Nennami Jion (b. 1351), Iizasa Choisai (b. 1387), and Chujo Nagahide (d. 1384) began to develop the first true schools of sword technique.

During the Sengoku period, or Period of the Warring States (1482–1588), the techniques of both sword and spear continued to advance. The bow was by no means obsolete, but as battles became more and more violent, the spear became more elevated in position, and phalanxes of spearmen preceded the mounted warriors into the fray. If the spear was somehow lost or broken, however, it was a man's skill with a sword, not just his size and strength, that meant the difference between life and death. And it was at this point that *iaijutsu*—the technique of drawing the sword from the scabbard in response to the enemy's movements—began to develop, mostly based on techniques developed by Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu (b. 1542). As techniques

of the sword became more practical, geared toward one-on-one battlefield situations, the sword itself continued to evolve into a weapon more convenient to handle and without ornament.

In 1542, a Chinese junk was blown off its course in a typhoon and took refuge on the small island of Tanegashima off the southern coast of Kyushu. On board were three Portuguese traders—the first Europeans to land in Japan—and the muskets they carried with them. These firearms, which for a long time were called *tanegashima*, were quickly copied and spread throughout Japan. Some in the warrior class disdained such weapons, but those who did not learned to put them to good use. One warlord in particular, Oda Nobunaga, was able to see the musket's value and used it to defeat the mounted spearmen of the mighty Takeda clan in 1575, clearly demonstrating that this was a weapon that would have to be reckoned with. Thus, although the bow, spear, and sword continued to be used, the firearm gradually became the main weapon of war.

In 1600, the Battle of Sekigahara secured the Tokugawa clan's hegemony, and with the destruction of Osaka Castle in 1615, the long peace of the Edo period began. The battles were now over; the muskets, spears, and bows—while still practiced as part of a samurai's duty—lost a good bit of their immediacy, and the arts of literacy and culture, *bun*, began to be emphasized as skills necessary for the continuance of the fief and, indeed, the country.

But what of the sword?

From Bujutsu to Budo

The sword holds a unique place in Japanese history and culture. It is one of the Three Regalia given by the gods to the first emperor, Jimmu, and thus connects the spiritual to the temporal world.[9] Historically, sword smiths have always been connected to Shinto shrines, and even today, the making of swords is performed with certain purification and religious rites. Indeed, the history of the great sword smiths—beginning with Ohara Yasutsuna (c. 806 C.E.), the first recorded sword smith—is considered by some scholars as important as the masters who wielded those swords. Eventually, many of these men understood the sword not just as an instrument of destruction but as a work of art; and the ornamentation of the Heian period was replaced with a simplicity and purity of design that might inspire the possessor of such an artifact to search out the same values within himself.

If the sword was the symbol of the warrior, then his identification with that sword would necessitate his being worthy of that symbol. And the questions arose: Was his own art equal to the art of the instrument

he used? Was he himself equal to the weapon he carried? Could swordsmanship be practiced concomitantly as defense, art, and religion? In other words, could bujutsu become budo?

The Edo period (1603–1868), with its 250 years of peace, created the perfect environment for such an advance. The establishment of the various schools of swordsmanship that had gradually refined sword techniques took place almost entirely from the end of the Warring States period to the beginning of the Edo period. And, of course, the founders of these schools had based their techniques on the very important practicality of defeating opponents and staying alive.

In this light, it is important to note that the great masters who founded their sword schools during the times of chaos were concerned with psychological as well as physical techniques. Faith in one's physical techniques was part and parcel of the various styles, courage being absolutely necessary in the face of death. For many of the sword masters, that faith came as revelations from the gods and buddhas. Tsukahara Bokuden of the Shinto-ryu, for example, received a "divine decree" at Kashima Shrine; and Ito Ittosai, the founder of the Itto-ryu, had his style revealed to him after seven days and seven nights of seclusion at the Grand Shrine at Mishima. Nennami Jion was enlightened to the secrets of his style at the Udo Shrine in Kyushu; and Hayashizaki Jinsuke, founder of iaido, discovered his new Way at the Dewa Tateoka Hayashizaki Shrine. With the assurance of the divine source of his techniques, the warrior might now retain his "everyday mind" and avoid the distraction of uncertainty that would keep him from victory. With the cessation of hostilities, and the religious skepticism that accompanied it, however, this faith in the gods and buddhas and the peace of mind it provided eventually and necessarily became a study of the mind itself. This in turn, broadened into a Way or posture for living.

In this way, training in techniques entered the realm of training in "the oneness of mind and techniques (心技一如)." Add to this the Confucian values of loyalty, purity of mind, standing by one's word, and etiquette advocated by the Tokugawa government, and a budo developed that would pervade every major dojo in Japan, regardless of the particular technique emphasized.

The sword, and the practice thereof, now became the instrument by which a man developed his own character to its fullest.

All of the writers included in this anthology lived during the Edo period, and thus shared a certain aesthetic and outlook, despite their very different experiences. Both Miyamoto Musashi and Yagyu Munenori participated in battles that directly preceded the Tokugawa regime, although Musashi gained much of his experience in his sixty-

some one-on-one bouts, and Munenori also drew much of his knowledge from the predecessors of his style. The Zen priest Takuan also lived during this early period and, although a Buddhist priest dedicated to nonviolence, he was born into a samurai family and was well acquainted with the weapon and its use. Ito Ittosai, whose style is described by a later disciple, lived most of his life during the chaos of the Warring States period, but passed his style on to descendants who would become instructors to the early Tokugawa shoguns. At the far end of the Edo period was Yamaoka Tesshu, who studied the Itto-ryu, made it his own, and helped ease the country through the tumultuous transition into the Meiji period. Both of the remaining two writers, Issai Chozanshi and Joseishi Matsura Seizan, lived during the middle of the Edo period, and so would not have experienced battles firsthand. Nevertheless, both were skilled swordsmen, Chozanshi likely having studied the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto-ryu of Iizasa Choisai, and Seizan the Shingyoto-ryu.

What ties them together is their insistence—each in his individual way—that conflict may be resolved through overcoming both the opponent and the self with practice, mindfulness, resolution, and even grace.

It may be asked why the sword was taken up rather than the firearm, which had proved far more effective on the field. There are, perhaps, several answers.

First, as has been noted, the sword had by this time become almost synonymous with the warrior. It was the sword that he constantly wore at his side; it was the weapon he depended upon when conflict resulted in one-on-one combat; and it was the symbol of purity, courage, and his own martial art. Second, again as noted, the great battles were over, and there was really no need for daily practice with the spear and matchlock. Such weapons could not be carried easily in the street during peacetimes and were certainly less practical in a sudden dangerous situation. Finally, the Tokugawa government itself aspired to keep the chaos of the Warring States from returning, and to establish a society based on peace, uneventfulness, and a halt in certain kinds of progress.[10] Thus, horse-drawn carriages, although far more practical than palanquins and litters, were forbidden; bridges over certain important rivers were not built, which required travelers to cross those rivers on the backs of laborers; and the matchlock, which was the standard at the end of the Warring States period, was completely repressed.

For the 250 years of the Edo period, however, the sword was sacrosanct. Considered the true soul of the samurai, it was understood as the protector of peace that would “subdue violence and put the people

at peace." Thus, much as the sword smiths tempered and refined the steel of a sword to make it a practical work of art, so the sword masters tempered and refined their styles, while the practitioner tempered and refined his mind and body in the practice of the sword to make himself a more complete human being.

Zen Buddhism

A brief word should be said about the influence of Zen Buddhism on the art of swordsmanship, as its presence can be detected in all of the entries in this anthology in one degree or another, from the writings of the Zen priest Takuan to the more Taoist-inclined work of Issai Chozanshi. We should recall that the very oldest historically dated school of swordsmanship, the Nen-ryu, was founded by a Zen priest, and that Zen's basic assumptions are valid for almost every style regardless of formal affiliation or the lack thereof.

Zen was first introduced to Japan by the monks Eisai (1141–1215) and Dogen (1200–1253), and it immediately attracted the warrior class, which admired Zen's values of egolessness, indifference to life and death, and resolution. Hojo Tokimune (1251–1284), the warrior-regent who had led the defense of Japan against the Mongol invasions, had somehow found the time to study Zen and would come to it in the time of greatest need. He is said to have had his eyes opened when, asking his Chinese Zen master Wu-hsueh how he could rid himself of cowardice, the master told him to first get rid of Tokimune. When asked later by Wu-hsueh how he would approach this problem, Tokimune simply shouted "Kwatz!"[11] and the matter was settled.

The two Zen values most pertinent to the martial artist are likely this ridding oneself of the ego, and its corollary of openness. According to the Zen masters, if the ego can be disposed of, indifference to life and death, resolution, and even compassion can follow without hindrance. "Killing" the ego is the meaning that lies behind Yamamoto Tsunetomo's famous sentence in the *Hagakure*, "The Way of the bushido is found in death," and the significance of the sword held by Fudo Myo-o,[12] which cuts through the ignorance generated by our sense of self. Zen holds that only when we eliminate our egos, which constantly muddy our vision with self-consciousness, will we be able to act with complete clarity and freedom.

As for openness, the very first line of the *Hsin hsin ming*, one of the earliest and most often read of Zen documents, advises us that

> Arriving at the Way is not difficult;
> Only avoid picking and choosing.

With this openness, the practitioner may naturally perform any of the hundred techniques he has mastered; without it, those techniques might well become barriers or, in the language of the martial arts, extra swords placed in the hands of the opponent. Preferences, in other words—be they preferences for techniques or for a particular weapon—are only baggage when it comes to a matter of life and death. Without picking and choosing, one reacts to the moment without hesitation. The hand that hesitates with thought is a dead hand, and by the time the "correct" response arrives, it is too late. Other verses from the *Hsin hsin ming* that illustrate this point:

> It is not good to overwork your spirit;[13]
> What use is it to shun some things and be intimate with others?
>
> Truth is not made up of distinctions;
> [Distinctions] come arbitrarily from our own likes and attachments.
> The wise man acts without fabrication;
> The fool fetters himself on his own.

The practice of Zen is not a substitute for the practice of techniques, however. The swordsman must work through the skills of his or her art over and over again; this cannot be ignored. What Zen offers the practitioner is the fluid state of mind with which those skills may be put to use, and an approach to conflict that may transcend such skills altogether.[14]

Finally, it must be emphasized that, despite the commonality of the Confucian ethics of budo, the influence of Zen Buddhism on almost all schools of swordsmanship, and the cross-fertilization of techniques over the hundreds of years that these schools developed, each master swordsman had his own singular approach and style. Ito Ittosai, for example, emphasized technique over the understanding of principles, and the understanding that everyday life was the battlefield; Takuan Soho, naturally enough for a Zen priest, based his argument on pure Zen; Yagyu Munenori walked the line between technique and Zen Buddhism; while Miyamoto Musashi stressed the psychology of combat. Issai Chozanshi, on the other hand, based his swordsmanship on an understanding of the universal energy ch'i and Taoist non-fabrication; Matsura Seizan emphasized the acceptance of fear as an integral part of conflict; and Tesshu applied his Zen and swordsmanship to every facet of his life.

> Everyone's enlightenment is the same; how they manifest it is different.
> —Zen saying

The books included in this anthology have been read and reread in Japan by martial artists for generations. Although the earliest works date from about 350 years ago, the principles they cover have been thought over and tested at least since the time of Nennami Jion, some two and a half centuries earlier still. Go back farther, and we find that Zen—which has long been applied to the martial arts—began to be developed in China during the sixth century C.E. Finally, one of the first books on strategy, which all of the authors in this current volume would have read, was compiled—also in China—about a thousand years before that. In this sense, the writings in this collection represent the development and percolation of the martial arts for over two millennia.

Written primarily for practitioners of swordsmanship, the principles discussed in these works can be applied not only to the other martial arts, such as karate, judo, and horsemanship, but to a broader spectrum of the arts as well. Musashi famously applied them to india ink painting, gardening, sculpture, and carpentry; Yagyu to governance and Noh theater; Tesshu to politics, drinking, and sex; and Takuan to the art of living. Currently, both business leaders and at least one major league baseball player study one or another of these books to enhance their own careers.

How, then, do we apply them to our own practice? Our own lives?

1

Ito Ittosai Kagehisa

> If you can contrive a single victory with a single blow in the very first crossing of swords, you will have a teaching to pass on to the students tomorrow even if you have just entered the dojo today. Although this would seem to be something extremely difficult, what it means is both striking and cutting down your opponent with One Mind, One Sword [一心一刀]. To receive a blow and immediately respond is Two Minds, Two Swords [二心二刀], and this is anathema. This is the meaning of the name Itto-ryu and is something you should acquire and devise on your own.
>
> —*Itto-ryu hitsuji,* a document from the Ono-ha Itto-ryu

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of the Itto-ryu to modern kendo, as it has been the fountainhead of so many subsequent styles. Yet, nearly every book dealing with its founder—whose style would be the inspiration of the Ono-ha Itto-ryu, the Tadanari-ha Itto-ryu, the Kaji-ha Itto-ryu, the Hokushin Itto-ryu, and the Kogen Itto-ryu among many others—begins with the words, “The facts of his life are wrapped in mystery.” The *Honcho bugei shoden*, for example, states simply,

> Ito Ittosai Kagehisa came from the province of Izu. He studied the sword and spear techniques of the Chujo-ryu from Kanemaki Jisai, and attained its deepest secrets. He then practiced the ascetic life of a student sword practitioner, wandering throughout the country, having some thirty-three bouts with swordsmen in various provinces. His technique was god-like and mysterious, and beyond the reach of description. The place of his death is unclear.

Of the many conflicting stories through which we may get a hint of his character, however, the most widely accepted go something like this:

Ito Ittosai Kagehisa was born on August 5, 1550, on the island of Oshima just off the coast of the province of Izu. When young, Itto-sai’s name was Maehara Yagoro, and he was said to have been the child of a

ronin banished to Oshima from his lord's domain on Shikoku. Oshima had been used as a penal colony since ancient times, and thus would have had a somewhat rough population, but Ittosai was more than a match for the run-of-the-mill in strength and violent temper, so much so that many there called him a demon.

At about the age of fourteen, Ittosai escaped to the mainland in a small boat (which overturned on the way, forcing him to swim for it) and walked to the town of Mishima. There he took refuge under the raised floor of the Mishima Shrine, a holy edifice having spiritual jurisdiction over the islands of Izu. Eventually, he requested a bout with a certain Toda Ippo, a well-known swordsman in the town, surrounded by a number of disciples. Ittosai, who was perhaps fifteen years old at the time, defeated Ippo with a single blow—a technique for which he would become famous. He was then invited to stay at the shrine by the official who had witnessed the bout, and his reputation as a swordsman was established. One night not long after this event, however, a great number of robbers—likely Ippo's disciples trying to extract revenge—pushed their way into the residence where Ittosai was staying. Not missing a beat, Ittosai unsheathed a famous sword presented to him by the shrine official and cut down seven men. He then cut in two one of the intruders and the large jar behind which the unfortunate man had attempted to hide. After this, the sword, which had been made by a Bizen Ichimonji sword smith, was named the "Jar-Smashing Sword."

Another story has it that one summer when Ittosai was in the capital, he defeated—again, with a single blow—a man who had wanted to make a name for himself by killing the now-famous swordsman. The defeated man silently vowed revenge, bribed a favorite mistress whom Ittosai was keeping, and ordered her to hide his swords when he was not looking. When Ittosai next came by for a visit, he got drunk on strong sake and sex, and eventually fell into a deep sleep. As the woman hung the mosquito netting over him, she carefully removed the long and short swords that he had placed by his pillow, and then led the men, who had been waiting outside, into the house. The men cut the netting so that it fell onto the unsuspecting Ittosai and then attacked him with swords drawn. Ittosai awoke, found that his weapons were gone, but was somehow able to crawl out from under the netting unharmed. Throwing furniture and some sake bottles that were left in the room, he separated the attackers from each other and, grabbing a sword from one of them, drove the men away. Reflecting on the affair, he left the woman's house without waiting for the dawn. This may have been the point when he realized that "everyday life is the battlefield."

Finally, there is the famous story of the match between Ittosai's two best disciples, Mikogami Tenzan and Ono Zenki. It is related this way in

the *Honcho bugei shoden*:

> Zenki had been going to succeed Ittosai for some time, but for some unknown reason, Ittosai wanted him killed. Eventually, Ittosai spoke secretly to Tenzan and said, "I want you to kill Zenki by yourself, but at this point, you do not have the ability to match his technique. This is an unfortunate situation, so I am passing my method of swordsmanship on to you." With this, he taught Tenzan the technique of *musoken* (夢想剣), literally, "dream (or vision) sword."
>
> After this, Ittosai beckoned the two disciples to a broad field called Kobanebara in the province of Shimosa, and said, "I have few remaining years left to me. I have always loved swordsmanship, have traveled around the various provinces, and have almost accomplished my purpose in life. I am thinking now that I would like to pass on my Jar-Smashing Sword to you, but I cannot give one sword to two men. The two of you, then, must fight here on this field until one man defeats the other. I will give the sword to the winner.
>
> The two men fought vigorously and bravely with real swords, but in the end, Zenki was no match for Tenzan and was cut down and killed. Ittosai praised Tenzan highly and presented him with his Jar-Smashing Sword.
>
> "With this, I am retiring from the practice of swordsmanship," he declared, "and will now enter the Buddhist Way. Return to your province and show the world what you have learned."
>
> He then departed to whereabouts unknown.

Tenzan later changed his name to Ono Jirozaemon Tadaaki and became sword master to the second generation shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada. But both he and his son, Ono Jiroemon Tadatsune, who became sword master to the third shogun, Iemitsu, were unrelenting in the dojo and had no regard for the social position of their students. Thus, they eventually alienated their benefactors, the shoguns, and were dismissed.

Ittosai's third disciple, Kotoda Kageyuzaemon Toshinao, a retainer of the Hojo clan in Odawara and already a master of the sword and spear when he met Ittosai, is credited with the work presented here. It was his descendent, Yahei Toshitada, who published it in 1653.

The book is not easy reading. Infused with both Zen Buddhism and the philosophical vocabulary of the time, it struggles to put into words the intuitive and experiential realizations of one of the most influential sword masters of all time. Toshinao did a great service in explaining the relative importance of practice and theory, citing both principles and techniques, but the reader is advised to take his very first line to heart.

“Technique,” he writes, “is the essential of this style. Putting technique into practice is principle, but it is fundamental that the practitioner first perform techniques.” This work is to be studied and meditated upon, reread, and thought through; but if the student does not realize it in the dojo, it will be no more than words on a page.

Ittosai Sensei Kenpo Sho

一刀斎先生剣法書

KOTODA YAHEI TOSHITADA

The essential of this style is technique. Putting technique into practice is principle. Thus, it is fundamental that the practitioner first perform techniques; grasp—both in body and mind—the actions of hard and soft, light and heavy, forward and back; and later completely understand the principles of how to change those techniques according to his opponent.[1] For even when he makes great strides in technique, if he does not understand the principles well, it will be difficult to be victorious. On the other hand, if he understands the principles clearly and has practiced the techniques intensely, he will not only understand the situation in his mind, but his hands and feet will react accordingly. When he reaches this stage, technique and principle are one, and there is no distinction between interior and exterior. Technique, then, is not different from principle, and principle is not different from technique; there is no technique outside of principle, and no principle separate from technique. The practitioner who only studies dexterity will stop one-sidedly at technique and will not understand which principles are correct, and which are incorrect. Or, if he becomes attached to principle and does not know the advantages and disadvantages of techniques, his proficiency will be lopsided. If he has propensities or attachments to either techniques or principles, he will be unable to respond and change according to his opponent.

In this way, since the time of our teacher, Ittosai, it has been considered essential in this tradition of swordsmanship to favor neither technique nor principle; rather, our secret instruction has been that the sword and the mind are not different. I myself am the last leaf on the branch of this style, and though I have studied its art, am without talent or great accomplishment and do not understand its mysteries. Nevertheless, because my devotion as a disciple makes it difficult for me to keep silent, I formally record here the generalities of the principles and techniques that have been handed down to me. This is truly like looking at the open sky through a tube, or brazenly seeking the censure of those who look at this in the future.

In this art, the practitioner should understand the distinction between "defeat" and "not winning." "Defeat" is, first of all, [one's opponent's] winning. "Not winning" is the situation of one's opponent's being able to defend himself. Thus, "defeat" resides within one's self, while "winning" resides within his opponent. The practitioner who would win at all costs does not understand the potential of his own defeat. This is because he only considers overcoming his own defeat but does not understand his opponent's potential for winning.

If the practitioner does not win, he does not necessarily lose; and if he does not lose, he does not necessarily win. Thus, a complete victory can mean a complete loss; and in a complete loss there can be a complete victory.

The master of this art understands the potential of loss in victory and of victory in loss. He has perfected his own techniques and principles, and has studied those of his opponent. In this way, he will be able to respond and change according to his opponent's moves.

Sun Tzu said,

> He who knows his opponent and knows himself may fight a hundred battles and never be in danger. He who does not know his opponent but knows himself will lose a battle for every one he wins. He who knows neither his opponent nor himself will, without a doubt, lose every battle he fights.

There are five stances: Heaven, Center, Earth, Yin, and Yang; and each of these can transform into the others. In the old traditions, the stances are fixed as either Yin or Yang: the sword centered in the body, or the body centered in the sword. Within the Yin stance is the transformation into the Yang, and within the Yang stance is the transformation into the Yin. Thus, within each stance is neither gain nor loss. A stance may be used in any situation, securing the hand and responding to the mind.

Traditionally, there is not one stance that is used exclusively. Whether it is used, or not, resides within one's self. The practitioner who desires to gain an advantage with a certain stance will always have content on the exterior and emptiness in the interior.[2] But this is called having one's mind taken by his stance. Our style's No-Shape stance[3] makes no distinction between interior and exterior or emptiness and content. The practitioner who makes the mistake of having his mind taken by his own stance may win if the stance is fitting, but will lose quickly when it is not. An assured victory is not in the stance; it is in the correct techniques and principles.

Nevertheless, a stance has a thousand transformations and ten thousand currents; it can take on shapes both hard and soft, or light and

heavy. For this reason, the practitioner should discipline himself and train well in the No-Shape stance.

It is not that the No-Shape stance is without form, but in taking up the Yin stance, there is no Yin, and in performing the Yang stance, there is no Yang. Though you may say that it has a certain shape, the mind is not taken by the stance, and this is what we call the No-Shape stance. The No-Shape stance is said to be "the level when mind and stance are not different."

The techniques of a thousand changes and ten thousand transformations manifest their shapes in responding to things. Thus, they are entirely No-Shape.

Presence does not change with the turn of circumstances.[4] When a practitioner's possession of presence is correct and clear, it will not be shaken or altered by his opponent's techniques or the principles upon which they are based. Without moving, presence controls one's opponent, and this is called the grade of non-transformation. Moving, one's opponent is set up for defeat by force,[5] and this is called the grade of transformation. Presence is at peace, and possesses a thousand changes; force moves, and responds to ten thousand transformations. Thus, you meet the opponent with presence, and defeat him with force. Presence and force are considered to be two, but they are one; they are considered to be one, but they are two. Force resides in presence; presence resides in force.

Non-transformation is the long and short of non-fabrication.[6] When the practitioner's presence is replete, he will neither fear his opponent nor doubt himself. Even without searching for it, one is naturally endowed with presence, and force resides within presence of its own accord.

"Reflection" is like the moon's being reflected in the water.[7] This is the level of holding the mind[8] and is the technique of "arrival."[9] "To Reflect"[10] is like the water's reflecting the moon. This is the level of *zanshin*, the mind remaining alert, and is the technique of "separation" or "disjoining." When these two are manifested by means of principle, they are the techniques taught as Water and Moon. Transmitted, they are called Reflection and To Reflect.

Looking with the eye is called *metsuke*, or observation of the opponent; maintaining this by means of principle is called Reflection. Attacking with technique is called To Reflect.

In Water and Moon, there is no distinction between far and near. The person who would attack the far and near will lose Reflection. This is

called having one's mind (the reflecting mind) taken. If the mind reaches the immutability of Water and Moon, and technique uses Holding and Remaining depending on the opponent, there will be no "not winning."

The moon moves along external things with No-Mind;[11] the water reflects the moon without thinking to do so.[12] If you have no twisted thoughts within, your techniques will be correct without.

The idea that principle precedes technique and that the body—stance—precedes the sword is a sickness of this art, and it comes from searching for some technique or principle when suddenly facing an opponent. The technique of adapting to circumstances is not in making changes according to thought or judiciousness. It is in changing according to natural principles without thinking, and responding without calculation. Thus, respect the principle that arises from your own reaction, and do not generate any thinking or discrimination. Have no doubt that victory will lie in a stable mind. You must fully recognize the correctness of your own reaction. The mental performance of the practitioner who studies this style should be exactly like this.

When you approach the highest reaches of this art, there will be no need to even think about stability of mind, nor will you have to make distinctions about respecting principles. Interior and exterior will become one,[13] and neither good nor evil will exist. Your mind alone will be endowed with all the thousand applications and the ten thousand transformations of your sword, and they will penetrate the ten directions and change according to circumstances with freedom. This is reaching the level of a special transmission apart from the ordinary teachings and is a result of practicing with the total concentration of One-Mind.[14]

The practice of not letting stratagem precede technique is in maintaining the Water and Moon, and in not allowing the generation of any twisted thoughts. Only then will the thousand transformations turn according to the One. The One is completely without form and is, for example, like water. Water is always without form, and thus can fill any container—square or round.

The practice of not having the body go first is the teaching of Sword First, Body Behind. This art is the method of being victorious by means of the blade. In this way, if the sword exists, so will technique. If technique exists, so will principle. The mind is the foundation of technique. The body is the foundation of the sword.

When the foundation, or root, is inside and the branch is on the outside, it is called substance.[15] This is correct order. When the branches are on the inside, and the root or foundation on the surface, it is called

emptiness.[16] This is reverse order. With substance, victory is certain; with emptiness, it is not so.

If strategy precedes technique and an unexpected situation arises, how will you react to the change? If (the stance of) the body precedes the work of the sword, how—and to whom—will your sword cause damage?

For this reason, make the foundation or root correct, and control the branches well. Reaching the fundamental correctness of sword and body lies within the effort you put into the practice of technique

The practitioner who is able to perform a technique externally responds to actions externally, but his strategy is internal. The practitioner who holds his technique internally follows the action internally, and is victorious over the external. Internal or external will be according to the practitioner's affinity, and he will react to what he likes and yield to what he dislikes. Thus, one looks carefully at the substance or emptiness [of his opponent's actions], attacks the foundation, and is victorious over the branches, or attacks the branches and is victorious over the foundation. Or, he may simultaneously attack the foundation and branches, and be victorious over both.

Thus, when one attacks by means of technique, he maintains his strategy; and when he attacks by means of strategy, he maintains his techniques. When an attack is both internal and external, faults will be without; when everything is maintained internally, the mistakes will be within. This is because the attack exists where it is maintained, and because the act of maintaining itself resides within the strategy of the attack.

In this way, the attack is not in the attack itself, but without the attack, you cannot win; and the maintaining is not within the act of maintaining itself, but without it, there can be no victory. This is the teaching of Remaining, yet Not Remaining.[17]

Thus, though you are able to execute every technique, if the foundation is not correct, how can the branches be also? The practitioner who is able to make both the foundation and the branches correct, without searching for the mind of ten thousand transformations but making a thousand changes freely, will make his own changes and transformations according to the moment.

When there is strategy in technique, it is said to be following upon your initial move. When there is technique in strategy, it is said to be following upon what you have behind that technique. But when you stop at your initial move, there will be no strategy [or benefit]; and when you stop with the follow-up, there will be no strategy [or benefit]

in your initial move.

It is an essential of this art to not stop with technique, principal, initial moves, or follow-ups. Thus, the enemy is in both the initial move and the follow-up, and one should not insist upon continuing with them. What is called the unification of the initial move and the follow-up is neither in the former nor the latter. But when there is an initial move, there is a follow-up; and when there is a follow-up, the initial is also there within.

The actions of strong, weak, light, and heavy are all the same. You make the techniques one, but they are also two; you make them two, but they are also one. Just when you look for them to be in the heavens, they spring forth from the earth; and when you look for them to erupt from the earth, they are in the far corners of the heavens. Their serenity is like a mountain, their movement like lightning or sparks from the stone. Because this unification of mind does not stop with either the initial move or the follow-up, it penetrates and responds to the universal principal and the ten thousand techniques.

Nevertheless, each technique possesses its own body and mind. Thus, grasping the technique of the initial move, one acts entirely on that initial move but also grasps the strategy; and understanding the technique of the follow-up, he uses the follow-up entirely but also understands its strategy. The actions of strong, weak, light, and heavy are all this way.

When you look at this in terms of principle, it would seem to be one-sided, but there is no strategy [or benefit] in seeking beyond grasping this technique in body and mind. Do not seek this in looking elsewhere. The mind is not altered with activity. This is the principle of not stopping at the initial move or the follow-up.

The man who has attained this art may stop at the initial move, but he will not be taken by it; and though he acts upon the follow-up, it will not detain him. If he acts with technique, he will not be colored or imbued with that technique; if he uses principle, he will not be held back by the techniques involved.

So when you expect to see form, there is absolutely none; and when you look for the formless, form is right before your eyes. This is called the unification of the twisted and the straight, of the heretical and the correct.

Winning by departing from principle is said to be the highest attainment of this art. There is a saying that goes, “In the end, the farthest reach [of an art] does not reside in patterns.” For the person who grasps this in his mind and responds to it in his limbs, mind is mind, technique is technique, I am I, and the opponent is the opponent. What then will he face? What will he look for? What will he toss away?

This is the secret teaching of One Technique.

Reaching this One Technique is the Way. Reaching it, who could fabricate it? The person who puts it into action and studies it has not yet arrived. However, if the person who has not yet arrived does not study it, he never will arrive.

Thus, by means of the secret teaching of the One Technique, we express the principle of not stopping at either the initial move or the follow-up.

In making the initial move, there is the initiative of the body, or stance, and the initiative of function, or technique. Attacking calmly with an unchanging stance is called the initiative of the body. Manifesting forms that transform from the first, while adapting to circumstances is called the initiative of function.

In our traditional teachings it is said that in the initiative of the body, one attacks with the body, but defends himself with function. This is snatching away the opponent's strategy, smashing his prepared defense, and attacking him in full conjunction. In this case, strategy is at the fore, while technique follows up behind.

In the initiative of function, one attacks with function, or technique, but defends himself with the body, or stance. This is breaking down the opponent's prepared defenses and snatching away his technique. Here, one attacks by moving away. Technique is at the fore, while strategy remains beneath the surface.

If the practitioner does not understand body, function, attack, and defense, and hopes to win by being carried away by recklessness, it will be the same as stretching out his head to be struck off and sticking out his hands to be cut away.

Temper yourself well.

There are two strategies for responding to an opponent's attack, depending on whether the attack is one of the body or one of function. If the opponent would make his strategy one of an attack of the body, respond to its first manifestation by breaking down his body—that is, his stance. If the opponent has not completely expended himself, respond to the branches—his techniques; if he has nothing left, follow up on his foundation—in this case, his body's stance. If his foundation wavers but the branches are calm, control the foundation. If his foundation is correct but the branches in confusion, respond to his techniques. If both foundation and branches are wavering, take advantage of his mistakes.

Nevertheless, simply by following his forms and chasing after his

hues, there is the chance that you yourself may be taken. For there will be no advantage in responding to the opponent's movements if he begins to grasp your techniques and strategies.

Thus, our own tradition on responding to an attack teaches that the practitioner must meet the form [stance] and kill the hue [technique]. This meeting and killing are the techniques of body and function. By meeting, you kill; by killing, you meet.

The movement of the sword, the strength or weakness of the strike, whether the function of the sword will be a fundamental or responsive one, the oral teachings on the relative positions of sword and body, their advantages and disadvantages—all of these are understood through practice. Thus will one reach the point where there is no difference between mind and sword, and abide freely in the technique of responding to circumstances.

This principle is subtle and difficult to teach. It is difficult to reach by study and is, in fact, a mysterious truth transmitted from mind to mind. If one is able to understand this in the same way that he would know for himself that water is either hot or cold, he will be in perfect accord with the very pith of our teacher's swordsmanship.

A requisite of winning is *ma*.[18] If the practitioner has a strategy in mind, his opponent will as well. If the practitioner advances, so will his opponent. The essential of a contest of this sort is ma.

Thus, what is called the measurement of ma in our style is in taking advantage of both position and rhythm.

Facing his opponent, the practitioner does not let the space of a single hair differentiate the distance between them; he does not give the first thought to danger; he drives in quickly and grasps the initiative for taking the absolute power over life and death. If his mind is taken by ma,[19] he will lose his ability to change. If his mind is unaffected by ma, that ma will remain clear and he will stay within its limits. In this way, the mind is not taken by ma, and ma is not taken by mind.

This should be on the same level as Water and Moon. The fundamental mental state of Water and Moon is that of No Principle and No Technique.[20] Thus, if you seek for Water and Moon, it will not be there; but if your single-minded concentration is pure, clear, and completely unclouded, Water and Moon will exist in every direction. There is no place it cannot reach.

An old saying has it that if you do not think in what is far away, you will come to grief in what is close by. Nevertheless, in ma there is no distinction between the far and the near. The practitioner does not [consciously] maintain ma, does not wait for change, and does not think about his opponent's taking the lead. Rather, the goal of our style is in

quickly taking predominance.

However, if one gets carried away by enthusiasm and falls into a state of nihility, it will be the same as wounding himself with his own sword.

Make the technique your opponent uses your own technique; make the strategy your opponent employs your own strategy. This is called the technique of the parrot. If your opponent comes forward with strength, meet him with strength; if he comes forward with weakness, meet him with weakness. If he strikes, receive the strike; if he seems ready to receive a blow, move away from him. All the ten thousand transformations of any strategy at all are like this. And this is called following the opponent's strategy.

When your opponent advances with substance or truth (実), meet him with substance; if he approaches with emptiness or falsehood (虚), follow him with emptiness. When your opponent shows either ability or inability, you, too, make a show of ability or inability.

If your art is imbued with truth, change to emptiness. Or, demonstrate emptiness and change to truth. When you face your opponent, first make a show of incompetency, and begin to lose. This is a beneficial strategy.

Sun Tzu said, "In truth, the martial art is the Way of deception." If you understand this entirely, you will not be forced into making changes by your opponent.

When you have understood One Mind, One Sword to be an important principle [of our style], you will have prepared yourself at the level of the unchanging mind. This is called no twisted thoughts.[21] As mentioned previously, this is the highest principle of our art. It is called a Simple Sword.[22] A Simple Sword is the absolute highest winning technique for striking at an opponent's No-Form, No-Aspect[23] even before technique and principle have arisen.

T'ai Kung said,[24]

> The art of winning in military affairs is in secretly judging
> the enemy's movements and their symptoms, quickly taking advantage
> of his strategy, and swiftly striking where he least expects it.

Our style's study of swordsmanship examines this principle well. If you can grasp this method, no matter how poor your art, you will have picked up the principle of what is appropriate to yourself.

Even if there is merit to a technique, if you do not understand the

heart and substance of its principle, you will not win your match. And even if a technique is not so efficacious, if you have studied its heart and substance, winning the match should not be in doubt.

Truly, this art is the one art of the samurai, and the complete armor of a courageous man. For this reason I have chosen this truth and passed it on. Studying it sincerely and keeping it hidden within yourself is the substance of a samurai.

Expressing as a distant mountain what is right before your eyes is the law of this art.

The strategy of technique is in my responding to the opponent's Two by means of my One.[25] For example, if he attacks, I receive; if he misses, I cut him down. This is responding to the Two by means of the One. But to receive and strike, or to miss and cut, are the techniques of the One being the One or the Two being the Two. When you respond to the Two with One, you will surely be victorious. But when you respond to the One with One, or Two with Two, you may win or you may lose. When you make the One into Two, you will lose right away.

Hard and soft, heavy and light, order and reverse, slow and quick, advance and retreat are all the same. The technique of a Thousand Swords and Ten Thousand Blades, its gain and loss, and whether it is correct or twisted reside in this.

You must think this over well and put it into practice.

It may be that you beat someone who is better than you, or that you are defeated by someone not up to your skill. Or still yet, that someone will lose in an equal match. This is in the order of principle. However, if you are unaware of your own limits, and stubbornly want to harm an opponent, this is not the Way.

The very foundation of a match is in the principles of nature, and what is right or wrong is extremely difficult to fathom. You may win in a way you hadn't thought of, or lose in a way you hadn't planned. Perhaps you should have won, but you lose; or perhaps you should have lost, but you win overwhelmingly. Perhaps you both die, or both live.

When good is used or seen as good, it is not so; when bad is used or seen as bad, it is not.[26] What will you face and take pleasure in your victory? What will you confront and feel bad about your defeat? The human being is a lesson in transience, and his gain or loss is a natural mysterious principle of the Way of Heaven.

In this way, when you face an opponent, do not think about the right or wrong of the match. With single-mindedness, let life and death go, give your fate over to the will of Heaven, maintain your righteousness, and do not be cowardly. Then you will have no opponent in all the ten

directions. And when you have no opponent, how will you lose?

This is the secret of One Sword as a Thousand, One Blade as Ten Thousand. Understanding this well is wisdom; being able to put it into action is courage. The man who can combine wisdom and courage with this art is said to be a master of the swordsmanship of this style.

When you and your opponent face each other, you attack a place he did not expect and retreat to a place he had not planned on; you do not go where he was waiting for you, and you block the place he thought of going to. But if you yourself do this, your opponent will be doing the same. He will strike at a place you did not expect him to, and respond in a way you had not planned for.

There is no limit to such transformations, and they are not fixed in any way. You must understand their natural mysterious principles, and respond to myriad situations. This is called a contest of techniques.

At such a moment, you and your opponent become one body and one mind: what you are thinking, he is thinking, and what he is sizing up, you are sizing up as well. Movement and rest have become one thing, and it is like facing your reflection in the mirror.

At this stage, there is no technique you can use for victory, and no principle you can know. Any desire to win will lead to defeat, but if you don't win, you will not defeat your opponent. This cannot be settled by what might be called natural principles or appropriate techniques. Who can overcome the extinction of both the existence or non-existence of technique and principle? If you do not win, you have not grasped the fundamental mind of this art. At the same time, the very desire to win is not this fundamental mind.

Thus, you must transcend the art itself and arrive at a higher teaching. Here, where will the opponent you would face be? Here, if you would come to face an opponent, it would only be killing yourself; but if you did not come, it would surely be self-destruction. This is both the Death-Dealing Sword and the Life-Giving Sword.

2

Takuan Soho

Takuan Soho was a Zen monk, calligrapher, painter, poet, gardener, tea master, and, perhaps, inventor of the pickle that even today retains his name. His writings were prodigious (the collected works fill six volumes) and are a source of guidance and inspiration to the Japanese people today, as they have been for three and a half centuries. Advisor and confidant to high and low, he seems to have moved freely through almost every stratum of society, instructing both shogun and emperor and, as legend has it, being friend and teacher to the swordsman-artist Miyamoto Musashi. He seems also to have remained unaffected by his fame and popularity, and at the approach of death he instructed his disciples, "Bury my body in the mountain behind the temple, cover it with dirt, and go home. Read no sutras, hold no ceremony. Receive no gifts from either monk or laity. Let the monks wear their robes, eat their meals, and carry on as on normal days." At his final moment, he wrote the Chinese character for *yume* ("dream"), put down the brush, and died.

Takuan was born in 1573 in the village of Izushi in the province of Tajima, an area of deep snows and mountain mists. Although born into a samurai family of the Miura clan at the culmination of 150 years of civil strife, Takuan entered a monastery at the age of ten to study the Jodo sect of Buddhism, moving on to practice the Rinzai sect of Zen at the age of fourteen, and becoming the abbot of the Daitokuji, a major Zen temple in Kyoto, at the unprecedented age of thirty-five.

To the end, Takuan is said to have followed his own independent, eccentric, and sometimes bitter way. His strength and angularity are apparent in his calligraphy and painting as well as in the following essays, and it is interesting that we can, perhaps, have a taste of the man's character by simply sampling a dish of *takuanzuke*, a pickle made from the giant Japanese radish.

Takuan's life may be summed up by his own admonition, "If you follow the present-day world, you will turn your back on the Way; if you would not turn your back on the Way, do not follow the world."

It is said that Takuan sought to infuse the spirit of Zen into every

aspect of life that caught his interest—such things as calligraphy, poetry, gardening, and the arts in general. This he also did with the art of the sword. Living during the last days of the violent feudal strife that culminated, essentially, with the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Takuan was acquainted not only with the peace and sublimity of the artist and tea master but also with the confrontation, victory, and defeat of the warrior and general. Among the latter men were such disparate figures as Ishida Mitsunari, a powerful general who supported Toyotomi Hideyoshi; Kuroda Nagamasa, a Christian daimyo who engineered Mitsunari's downfall; and, especially, his friend Yagyu Munenori, the head of the Yagyu Shinkage school of swordsmanship and teacher to two generations of shoguns. To these men and to these times, Takuan addressed himself no less than to others.

The two essays included here were letters: *Fudochi shinmyoroku* (The Mysterious Record of Immovable Wisdom), written to Yagyu Munenori, and *Taiaki* (Annals of the Sword Taia), written perhaps to Munenori or possibly Ono no Tadaaki, head of the Itto school of swordsmanship and also an official instructor to the shogun's family and close retainers. The circumstances of how they came to be written are unclear, although the frank advice and rather Confucian admonishment to Munenori at the end of *Fudochi shinmyoroku* adds another interesting if somewhat puzzling dimension to this work.

As a whole, both essays are addressed to the samurai class, and both seek to unify the spirit of Zen with the spirit of the sword. The advice given is a blend of the practical, technical, and philosophical aspects of confrontation. Broadly speaking, one could say that *Fudochi shinmyoroku* deals not only with technique but with how the self is related to the Self during confrontation and how an individual may become a unified whole. *Taiaki*, on the other hand, deals more with the psychological aspects of the relationship between the self and the other. Both essays turn the individual to knowledge of himself, and hence to the art of life.

Swordsmanship as an expression of technique and meditative Zen had long existed in Japan, Zen having become firmly established around the end of the twelfth century. With Takuan the two achieved a true coalescence, and his writings and opinions about the sword have been extraordinarily influential on the direction that the art of swordsmanship has taken from that day to the present. Firmly establishing the unity of Zen and the sword, Takuan's thoughts influenced the writings of the great masters of the time and produced a spin-off of documents that continue to be read and applied, such as the *Heiho kadensho* of Yagyu Munenori and the *Gorin no sho* of Miyamoto Musashi. The styles of these men differed, but their conclusions form a lofty level of insight and understanding, whether it be expressed as the

“freedom and spontaneity” of Musashi, the “ordinary mind that knows no rules” of Munenori, or the “unfettered mind” of Takuan.

For Takuan, the culmination was not one of death and destruction, but rather of enlightenment and salvation. Confrontation, in the right mind, would not only give life but give it more abundantly.

The Mysterious Record of Immovable Wisdom

不動智神妙録

The Affliction of Abiding in Ignorance

The term *ignorance* means the absence of enlightenment. Which is to say, delusion.

Abiding place means the place where the mind stops.

In the practice of Buddhism, there are said to be fifty-two stages, and within these fifty-two, the place where the mind stops at one thing is called the abiding place. Abiding signifies stopping, and stopping means the mind is being detained by some matter, which may be any matter at all.

To speak in terms of your own martial art, when you first notice the sword that is moving to strike you, if you think of meeting that sword just as it is, your mind will stop at the sword in just that position, your own movements will be undone, and you will be cut down by your opponent. This is what stopping means.

Although you see the sword that moves to strike you, if your mind is not detained by it and you meet the rhythm of the advancing sword, if you do not think of striking your opponent and no thoughts or judgments remain, if the instant you see the swinging sword your mind is not the least bit detained and you move straight in and wrench the sword away from him, the sword that was going to cut you down will become your own and, contrarily, will be the sword that cuts down your opponent.

In Zen this is called grabbing the spear and, contrariwise, piercing the man who had come to pierce you. The spear is a weapon. The heart of this is that the sword you wrest from your adversary becomes the sword that cuts him down. This is what you, in your style, call No-Sword.

Whether by the strike of the enemy or your own thrust, whether by the man who strikes or the sword that strikes, whether by position or rhythm, if your mind is diverted in any way, your actions will falter, and this can mean that you will be cut down.

If you place yourself before your opponent, your mind will be taken by him. You should not place your mind within yourself. Bracing the mind in the body is something done only at the inception of training,

when one is a beginner.

The mind can be taken by the sword. If you put your mind in the rhythm of the contest, your mind can be taken by that as well. If you place your mind in your own sword, your mind can be taken by your own sword. Your mind stopping at any of these places, you become an empty shell. You surely recall such situations yourself. They can be said to apply to Buddhism.

In Buddhism, we call this stopping of the mind *delusion.* Thus we say, "The affliction of abiding in ignorance."

The Immovable Wisdom of All Buddhas

Immovable means unmoving.

Wisdom means the wisdom of intelligence.

Although wisdom is called immovable, this does not signify any insentient thing, like wood or stone. It moves as the mind is wont to move: forward or back, to the left, to the right, in the ten directions, and to the eight points; and the mind that does not stop at all is called immovable wisdom.

Fudo Myo-o grasps a sword in his right hand and holds a rope in his left hand.[1] He bares his teeth and his eyes flash with anger. His form stands firmly, ready to defeat the evil spirits that would obstruct the Buddhist Law. This is not hidden in any country anywhere. His form is made in the shape of a protector of Buddhism, while his embodiment is that of immovable wisdom. This is what is shown to living things.

Seeing this form, the ordinary man becomes afraid and has no thoughts of becoming an enemy of Buddhism. The man who is close to enlightenment understands that this manifests immovable wisdom and clears away all delusion. For the man who can make his immovable wisdom apparent and who is able to physically practice this mental dharma as well as Buddhist Law, the evil spirits will no longer proliferate. This is the purpose of Fudo Myo-o's tidings.

What is called Fudo Myo-o is said to be one's unmoving mind and an unvacillating body. "Unvacillating" means not being detained by anything.

Glancing at something and not stopping the mind is called "immovable." This is because when the mind stops at something, as the breast is filled with various judgments, there are various movements within it. When its movements cease, the stopping mind moves, but does not move at all.

If ten men, each with a sword, come at you with swords slashing, if you parry each sword without stopping the mind at each action, and go from one to the next, you will not be lacking in a proper action for every

one of the ten.

Although the mind act ten times against ten men, if it does not halt at even one of them and you react to one after another, will proper action be lacking?

But if the mind stops before one of these men, though you parry his striking sword, when the next man comes, the right action will have slipped away.

Considering that the Thousand-Armed Kannon has one thousand arms on its one body, if the mind stops at the one holding a bow, the other nine hundred and ninety-nine will be useless.[2] It is because the mind is not detained at one place that all the arms are useful.

As for Kannon, to what purpose would it have a thousand arms attached to one body? This form is made with the intent of pointing out to men that if their immovable wisdom is let go, even if a body has a thousand arms, every one will be of use.

When facing a single tree, if you look at a single one of its red leaves, you will not see all the others. When the eye is not set on any one leaf, and you face the tree with nothing at all in mind, any number of leaves are visible to the eye without limit. But if a single leaf holds the eye, it will be as if the remaining leaves were not there.

One who has understood this is no different from the Kannon with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes.

The ordinary man simply believes that it is blessed because of its thousand arms and its thousand eyes. The man of half-baked wisdom, wondering how anybody could have a thousand eyes, calls it a lie and gives in to slander. But if now one understands a little better, he will have a respectful belief based on principle and will not need the simple faith of the ordinary man or the slander of the other, and he will understand that Buddhism, with this one thing, manifests its principle well.

All religions are like this. I have seen that Shinto especially is like this.

The ordinary man thinks only on the surface. The man who attacks Buddhism is even worse.

This religion, that religion, there are various kinds but at their deepest points they are all settled in one conclusion.

At any rate, when one practices discipline and moves from the beginner's territory to immovable wisdom, he makes a return and falls back to the level of the beginning, the abiding place.

There is a reason for this.

Again, we can speak with reference to your own martial art. As the beginner knows nothing about either his body posture or the positioning of his sword, neither does his mind stop anywhere within him. If a man strikes at him with the sword, he simply meets the attack without

anything in mind.

As he studies various things and is taught the diverse ways of how to take a stance, the manner of grasping his sword, and where to put his mind, his mind stops in many places. Now if he wants to strike at an opponent, he is extraordinarily discomforted. Later, as days pass and time piles up, in accordance with his practice, neither the postures of his body nor the ways of grasping the sword are weighed in his mind. His mind simply becomes as it was in the beginning when he knew nothing and had yet to be taught anything at all.

In this one sees the sense of the beginning being the same as the end, as when one counts from one to ten, and the first and last numbers become adjacent.

In other things—musical pitch, for example, when one moves from the beginning lowest pitch to the final highest pitch—the lowest and the highest become adjacent.[3]

We say that the highest and the lowest come to resemble each other. Buddhism, when you reach its very depths, is like the man who knows nothing of either the Buddha or the Buddhist Law. It has neither adornment nor anything else that would draw men's attention to it.

The ignorance and afflictions of the beginning, abiding place and the immovable wisdom that comes later become one. The function of the intellect disappears, and one ends in a state of No-Mind, No-Thought. If one reaches the deepest point, arms, legs, and body remember what to do, but the mind does not enter into this at all.

The Buddhist priest Bukkoku wrote:[4]

Although it does not
mindfully keep guard,
In the small mountain fields
the scarecrow
does not stand in vain.

Everything is like this.

To make a scarecrow for the mountain fields, one fashions a human figure and puts in its hands a bow and arrow. The birds and beasts see this and flee. Although this figure has absolutely no mind, if the deer become frightened and run away, insofar as it has fulfilled its function, it has not been created in vain.

This is an example of the behavior of the people who have reached the depths of any Way. While hands, feet, and body may move, the mind does not stop anyplace at all, and one does not know where it is. Being in a state of No-Mind, No-Thought, one has come to the level of the scarecrow of the mountain fields.

Of the common man who has not found his path, we can say that

from the very beginning he has had no wisdom and it will never come forth, whatever the circumstances. The wisdom that is highest of all, being in the most remote of all places, will absolutely not come forth. Finally, the half-baked know-it-all lets his wisdom come right off the top of his head, and this is ridiculous. The decorum of the priests of today can surely be thought of in such a light. This is a matter of shame.

There is such a thing as training in principle, and such a thing as training in technique.

Principle is as I have already explained above: when you arrive, nothing is noticed. It is simply as though you had discarded all concentration. I have written at length about this above.

If you do not train in technique, but only fill your breast with principle, your body and your hands will not function. Training in technique, if put into terms of your own martial art, is in the training that if practiced over and over again makes the five body postures one.

Even though you know principle, you must make yourself perfectly free in the use of technique. And even though you may wield the sword that you carry with you well, if you are unclear on the deepest aspects of principle, you will likely fall short of proficiency.

Technique and principle are just like the two wheels of a cart.

Where One Puts the Mind

We say that

If one puts his mind in the action of his opponent's body, his mind will be taken by the action of his opponent's body.[5]

If he puts his mind in his opponent's sword, his mind will be taken by that sword.

If he puts his mind in thoughts of his opponent's intention to strike him, his mind will be taken by thoughts of his opponent's intention to strike him.

If he puts his mind in his own sword, his mind will be taken by his own sword.

If he puts his mind in his own intention of not being struck, his mind will be taken by his intention of not being struck.

If he puts his mind in the other man's stance, his mind will be taken by the other man's stance.

What this means is that there is no place to put the mind.

A certain person once said, "No matter where I put my mind, my intentions are held in check in the place where my mind goes, and I lose to my opponent. Because of that, I place my mind just below my navel and do not let it wander.[6] Thus am I able to change according to the actions of my opponent."

This is reasonable. But viewed from the highest standpoint of Buddhism, putting the mind just below the navel and not allowing it to wander is a low level of understanding, not a high one. It is at the level of discipline and training. It is at the level of seriousness, or of Mencius's saying, "Seek after the lost mind."[7] This is not the highest level, either. It has the sense of seriousness. As for the "lost mind," I have written about this elsewhere, and you can take a look at it there.

If you consider putting your mind below your navel and not letting it wander, your mind will be taken by the mind that thinks of this plan. You will have no ability to move ahead and will be exceptionally unfree.

This leads to the next question, "If putting my mind below my navel leaves me unable to function and without freedom, it is of no use. In what part of my body, then, should I put my mind?"

I answered, "If you put it in your right hand, it will be taken by the right hand and your body will lack its functioning. If you put your mind in the eye, it will be taken by the eye, and your body will lack its functioning. If you put your mind in your right foot, your mind will be taken by the right foot, and your body will lack its functioning.

"No matter where you put it, if you put the mind in one place, the rest of your body will lack its functioning."

"Well, then, where does one put his mind?"

I answered, "If you don't put it anywhere, it will go to all parts of your body and extend throughout its entirety. In this way, when it enters your hand, it will realize the hand's function. When it enters your foot, it will realize the foot's function. When it enters your eye, it will realize the eye's function.

"If you should decide on one place and put the mind there, it will be taken by that place and lose its function. If one thinks, he will be taken by his thoughts.

"Because this is so, leave aside thoughts and discrimination, throw the mind away from the entire body, do not stop it here and there, and when it does visit these various places, it will realize function and act without error."

Putting the mind in one place is called falling into one-sidedness. One-sidedness is said to be bias in one place. Correctness is in moving about anywhere. The Correct Mind shows itself by extending the mind throughout the body. It is not biased in any one place.

When the mind is biased in one place and lacking in another, it is called a one-sided mind. One-sidedness is despicable. To be arrested by anything, no matter what, is falling into one-sidedness and is despised by those traveling the Way.

When a person does not think, "Where shall I put it?" the mind will extend throughout the entire body and move about to any place at all.

Not putting the mind anywhere, can't one use the mind, having it go from place to place, responding to the opponent's movements?

If the mind moves about the entire body, when the hand is called into action, one should use the mind that is in the hand. When the foot is called for, one should use the mind that is in the foot. But if you determine one place in which to put it, when you try to draw it out of that place, there it will stay. It will be without function.

Keeping the mind like a tied-up cat and not allowing it to wander, when you keep it in check within yourself, within yourself will it be detained. Forsaking it within your body, it will go nowhere.

The effort not to stop the mind in just one place—this is discipline. Not stopping the mind is object and essence. Put nowhere, it will be everywhere. Even in moving the mind outside the body, if it is sent in one direction, it will be lacking in nine others. If the mind is not restricted to just one direction, it will be in all ten.

The Right Mind and the Confused Mind

The Right Mind is the mind that does not remain in one place. It is the mind that stretches throughout the entire body and self.

The Confused Mind is the mind that, thinking something over, congeals in one place.

When the Right Mind congeals and settles in one place, it becomes what is called the Confused Mind. When the Right Mind is lost, it is lacking in function here and there. For this reason, it is important not to lose it.

In not remaining in one place, the Right Mind is like water. The Confused Mind is like ice, and ice is unable to wash hands or head. When ice is melted, it becomes water and flows everywhere, and it can wash the hands, the feet, or anything else.

If the mind congeals in one place and remains with one thing, it is like frozen water and is unable to be used freely: ice that can wash neither hands nor feet. When the mind is melted and is used like water, extending throughout the body, it can be sent wherever one wants to send it.

This is the Right Mind.

Annals of the Sword Taia

太阿記

Presumably, as a martial artist, I do not fight for gain or loss, am not concerned with strength or weakness, and neither advance a

> step nor retreat a step. The enemy does not see me. I do not see the enemy. Penetrating to a place where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where Yin and Yang have not yet arrived, I quickly and necessarily gain effect.[8]

Presumably indicates something I do not know for sure.

Originally, this character was read with the meaning "lid." For example, when a lid is put on a tier of boxes, although we do not know for sure what has been put inside, if we use our imaginations we will hit the mark six or seven times out of ten. Here also I do not know for sure, but figure tentatively that it must be so. Actually, this is a written form we use even about things we do know for sure. We do this to humble ourselves and so as not to seem to be speaking in a knowing manner.

Martial artist is as the characters indicate.

Not to fight for gain or loss, not to be concerned with strength or weakness means not vying for victory or worrying about defeat, and not being concerned with the functions of strength or weakness.

Neither advance a step nor retreat a step means taking neither one step forward nor one step to the rear. Victory is gained without stirring from where you are.

The *me* of "the enemy does not see me" refers to my True Self. It does not mean my perceived self.

People can easily see the perceived self; it is rare for them to discern the True Self. Thus I say, "The enemy does not see me."

I do not see the enemy. Because I do not take the personal view of the perceived self,[9] I do not see the martial art of the enemy's perceived self. Although I say, "I do not see the enemy," this does not mean I do not see the enemy right before my very eyes. To be able to see the one without seeing the other is a singular thing.

Well, then, the True Self is the self that existed before the division of heaven and earth and before one's father and mother were born. This self is the self within me, the birds and the beasts, the grasses and the trees and all phenomena. It is exactly what is called the Buddha-nature.

This self has no shape or form, has no birth, and has no death. It is not a self that can be seen with the aid of your present physical eye. Only the man who has received enlightenment is able to see this. The man who does see this is said to have seen into his own nature and become a Buddha.

Long ago, the World Honored One went into the Snowy Mountains, and after passing six years in suffering, became enlightened.[10] This was the enlightenment of the True Self. The ordinary man has no strength of faith and does not know the persistence of even three or five years. But those who study the Way are absolutely diligent for ten to twenty years,

twenty-four hours a day. They muster up great strength of faith, speak with those who have wisdom, and disregard adversity and suffering. Like a parent who has lost a child, they do not retreat a scintilla from their established resolution. They think deeply, adding inquiry to inquiry. In the end, they arrive at the place where even Buddhist doctrine and the Buddhist Law melt away, and are naturally able to see "This."

Penetrating to a place where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where yin and yang have not yet arrived, I quickly and necessarily gain effect means to set one's eye on the place that existed before heaven became heaven and earth became earth, before yin and yang came into being. It is to use neither thought nor reasoning and to look straight ahead. In this way, the time of gaining great effect will surely arrive.

> Well, then, the accomplished man uses the sword but does not kill others. He uses the sword and gives others life. When it is necessary to kill, he kills. When it is necessary to give life, he gives life. When killing, he kills in complete concentration; when giving life, he gives life in complete concentration. Without looking at right and wrong, he is able to see right and wrong; without attempting to discriminate, he is able to discriminate well. Treading on water is just like treading on land, and treading on land is just like treading on water. If he is able to gain this freedom, he will not be perplexed by anyone on earth. In all things, he will be beyond companions.

The accomplished man means the man accomplished in the martial arts.

He uses the sword, but not to kill others means that even though he does not use the sword to cut others down, when others are confronted by this principle, they cower and become as dead men of their own accord. There is no need to kill them.

He uses the sword and gives others life means that while he deals with his opponent with a sword, he leaves everything to the movements of the other man and is able to observe him just as he pleases.

When it is necessary to kill, he kills; when it is necessary to give life, he gives life. When killing, he kills with complete concentration; when giving life, he gives life with complete concentration means that in either giving life or taking life, he does so with freedom in a meditative state that is total absorption, and the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation.

Without looking at right and wrong, he is able to see right and wrong; without attempting to discriminate, he is able to discriminate well. This means that, concerning his martial art, he does not look at it to say "correct" or "incorrect," but he is able to see which it is. He does not attempt to judge matters, but he is able to do so well.

If one sets up a mirror, the form of whatever happens to be in front of it will be reflected and will be seen. As the mirror does this mindlessly, the various forms are reflected clearly, without any intent to discriminate this from that. Setting up his whole mind like a mirror, the man who employs the martial arts will have no intention of discriminating right from wrong, but according to the brightness of the mirror of his mind, the judgment of right and wrong will be perceived without his giving it any thought.

Treading on water is just like treading on land, and treading on land is just like treading on water. The meaning of this will not be known by anyone unenlightened about the very source of mankind.

If the fool steps on land like he steps on water, when he walks on land, he is going to fall on his face. If he steps on water like he steps on land, when he does step onto water, he may think he can actually walk around. Concerning this matter, the man who forgets about both land and water should arrive at this principle for the first time.

If he is able to gain this freedom, he will not be perplexed by anyone on earth. According to this, the martial artist who is able to gain freedom will not be in a quandary about what to do, regardless of who on earth he comes up against.

In all things, he will be beyond companions means that as he will be without peer in all the world, he will be just like Shakyamuni, who said, "In heaven above and earth below, I alone am the Honored One."[11]

> Do you want to obtain this? Walking, stopping, sitting, or lying down, in speaking and in remaining quiet, during tea and during rice, you must never neglect exertion, you must quickly set your eye on the goal, and investigate thoroughly, both coming and going. Thus should you look straight into things. As months pile up and years pass by, it should seem like a light appearing on its own in the dark. You will receive wisdom without a teacher and will generate mysterious ability without trying to do so. At just such a time, this does not depart from the ordinary, yet it transcends it. By name, I call it "Taia."

Do you want to obtain this? "This" points out what was written about above, so the question is whether you are considering obtaining the meaning of the foregoing.

Walking, stopping, sitting, or lying down. The four of these—walking, stopping, sitting, lying down—are called the Four Dignities.[12] All people are involved in them.

In speaking and in remaining silent means while talking about things or without uttering a word.

During tea and during rice means while drinking tea and eating rice.

You must never neglect exertion, you must quickly set your eye on the goal, and investigate thoroughly, both coming and going. Thus should you look straight into things. This means that you should never be careless or negligent in your efforts, and you should constantly come back to yourself. You should quickly fix your eye on the goal and continually investigate these principles in depth. Always go straight ahead, considering what is right to be right, and what is wrong to be wrong, while observing this principle in all things.

As months pile up and years pass by, it should seem like a light appearing on its own in the dark means that, in just that way, you should carry on with your efforts tirelessly. As you advance with the accumulation of months and years, the acquiring you do on your own of this mysterious principle will be just like suddenly encountering the light from a lantern on a dark night.

You will receive wisdom without a teacher means that you will acquire this fundamental wisdom without its ever having been transmitted to you by a teacher.

You will generate mysterious ability without trying to do so. Because the works of the ordinary man all come from his consciousness, they are all actions of the world of created phenomena and are involved with suffering. At the same time, because actions that are uncreated are generated from this fundamental wisdom, they alone are natural and peaceful.[13]

At just such a time means precisely at such a time. It indicates the time when one receives wisdom without a teacher and generates mysterious ability without trying to do so.

The meaning of *this does not depart from the ordinary, yet it transcends it* is that this uncreated mysterious ability is not generated from the unusual.

Since only actions that are unremarkably everyday in character become the uncreated, this principle never departs, nor does it separate itself, from the ordinary. Which is still to say that the ordinary actions in the world of created phenomena of the everyday ordinary man are entirely different. Thus it is said that "this does not depart from the ordinary, yet it transcends it."

By name, I call it "Taia." Taia is the name of [an ancient Chinese] sword that has no equal under heaven. This famous jeweled sword can freely cut anything, from rigid metal and tempered steel to dense and hardened gems and stones. Under heaven there is nothing that can parry this blade. The person who obtains this uncreated mysterious ability will not be swayed by the commander of huge armies or an enemy force of hundreds of thousands. This is the same as there being nothing that can impede the blade of this famous sword. Thus I call the strength of this

mysterious ability the Sword Taia.

> All men are equipped with this sharp Sword Taia, and in each one it is perfectly complete. Those for whom this is clear are feared even by the *maras*, but those for whom this is obscure are deceived even by the heretics.[14] On the one hand, when two of equal skill meet at swords' point, there is no conclusion to the match; it is like Shakyamuni's holding the flower and Kashyapa's subtle smile.[15] On the other hand, raising the one and understanding the other three, or distinguishing subtle differences in weight with the unaided eye are examples of ordinary cleverness.[16] If anyone has mastered this, he will quickly cut you into three pieces even before the one has been raised and the three understood. How much more so when you meet him face to face?

All men are equipped with this sharp Sword Taia, and in each one it is perfectly complete. This means that the famous Sword Taia, which no blade under heaven can parry, is not imparted just to other men. Everyone, without exception, is equipped with it; it is inadequate for no one and it is perfectly entire.

This is a matter of the mind. This mind was not born with your birth and will not die with your death. This being true, it is said to be your Original Face.[17] Heaven is not able to cover it. Earth is not able to support it. Fire is not able to burn it, nor is water able to dampen it. Even the wind is unable to penetrate it. There is nothing under heaven that is able to obstruct it.

Those for whom this is clear are feared even by the maras, but those for whom this is obscure are deceived even by the heretics. For the person who is clearly enlightened concerning his Original Face, there is nothing in the universe that obscures or obstructs his vision. Thus there is no means of enacting the supernatural power of the maras. Because such a person sees through to the bottom of his own intentions, the maras fear and avoid him; they hesitate to draw near. Conversely, the person who is obscure and lost concerning his Original Face accumulates any number of confused thoughts and delusions, which then adhere to him. Heretics are easily able to deceive and swindle such a person.

When two of equal skill at this meet at swords' point, there is no conclusion to the match. The meaning of this is that if two men who had both penetrated their Original Face were to meet, each unsheathed the Sword Taia, and they faced off, it would be impossible to bring matters to a conclusion. If one were to ask about this, it might be likened to the meeting of Shakyamuni and Kashyapa.

Shakyamuni's holding the flower and Kashyapa's subtle smile. At the gathering at Gridhrakuta Peak when Shakyamuni was about to die, he

held up a single red lotus. He showed this to eighty thousand monks and every one of them remained silent. Only Kashyapa smiled. Knowing at that time that Kashyapa had been enlightened, Shakyamuni entrusted him with the Correct Doctrine, which does not rely on the written word and is specially transmitted without instruction, and affirmed on him the Buddha-seal.[18]

Since that time, the Correct Doctrine was transmitted in India in twenty-eight successions to Bodhidharma. In China it was passed on from Bodhidharma in six transmissions to reach the Sixth Patriarch, the Zen master Ta Chien.[19]

As this Zen Master was incarnated a bodhisattva, from this time the Buddhist Law flourished in China, spreading its leaves and branches, quickly promulgating the Five Houses and Seven Sects, and finally being transmitted to the Japanese priests Daiō and Daitō through the priest Nai Chih Hsü T'ang.[20] This has been unremittingly continued from teacher to disciple to the present day.

The doctrine of "holding the flower . . . the subtle smile" is difficult to arrive at and is not easily unraveled by guesswork. One must drink in the breath of all the Buddhas while swallowing one's own voice.

Although there is really no way to express this principle, if pressed, one might summon up the example of taking water from one vessel and pouring it into another so that the waters become mixed and indistinguishable. This is the moment when the eyes of Shakyamuni and Kashyapa meet and become one. Relativity is no longer there.

Among all martial artists of every discipline, there is not one in one hundred thousand who has grasped the purport of "holding the flower . . . the subtle smile." Nevertheless, if one did have the most steadfast of intentions and truly wanted to understand, he would have to discipline himself for another thirty years. Erring in this would not simply be a matter of not mastering martial arts; he would enter hell like an arrow shot from a bow. This is truly a frightening thing.

Raising the one and understanding the other three means that as soon as one part is shown, the other three are immediately understood.

Distinguishing subtle differences in weight with the unaided eye. Distinguishing . . . with the unaided eye means the eye's function, or measurement by the eye.

Differences in weight are extremely subtle. The man who is able to measure out any weight of gold and silver by eye and not err by the slightest amount is a clever and skillful person.

These are examples of ordinary cleverness signifies that such clever people are ordinary and their number is legion, and thus there is nothing special about them.

If anyone has mastered this, he will quickly cut you into three pieces even

before the one has been raised and the three understood. This pertains to the person who has been enlightened concerning the cause of the Buddha's appearance in the world. It is he who will quickly cut you into three parts before the one has been raised, the three understood, or before any indication whatsoever appears. Thus I suppose that, in meeting someone like this, there is nothing that could be done.

How much more so when you meet him face to face? A man who has gained such celerity and subtlety, when meeting another man face to face, will cut so easily that his opponent will never know that his head has fallen off.

> In the end, a man like this never exposes the tip of his sword. Its speed—even lightning cannot keep up with it. Its brevity—it is gone even before the quick wind of the storm. Not having such a tactic, if one, in the end, becomes entangled or confused, he will damage his own blade or injure his own hand, and will fall short of adroitness. One does not divine this by impressions or knowledge. There is no transmitting it by words or speech, no learning it by any doctrine. This is the law of the special transmission beyond instruction.

In the end, a man like this never exposes the tip of his sword means that a master never, from the very beginning, shows the tip of his sword.

Its speed—even lightning cannot keep up with it. Its brevity—it is gone even before the quick wind of the storm. As for the speed of technique, this means that even the lightning, which is gone just as you think you have seen it, cannot pass through this man's movements. As for its brevity, it disappears even faster than the fine grains of sand that are blown before the storm.

Not having such a tactic, if one, in the end, becomes entangled or confused . . . says that without such skill, if one becomes just a little attached to the raising of his sword or just a little attached to the application of his mind . . .

He will damage his own blade or injure his own hand, and will fall short of adroitness means that he will definitely break off the tip of his own sword, will cut his own hand, and is unlikely ever to be called skillful.

One does not divine this by impressions or knowledge. "Impressions or knowledge" refers to the knowledge and discrimination within the human heart. "Divine" means calculating and figuring things out. What this means is that no matter how much you try to figure or calculate by means of impressions or knowledge, it will not prove the least bit useful. Therefore, separate yourself from the discrimination of figuring things out.

There is no transmitting it by words or speech, no learning it by any doctrine. For the true martial artist, there is no way to pass this on by

words. Moreover, there is no way to teach or learn through doctrine what kind of stance to take or where to strike.

This is the law of the special transmission beyond instruction. It cannot be transmitted with words, and no matter what method one may take, it cannot be taught. Therefore this is called the doctrine of "a special transmission beyond instruction." This is a doctrine outside the teachings of an instructor, a doctrine that particularly requires self-enlightenment and realization on one's own.

> There is no established rule for manifesting this great ability. Orderly action, contrary action—even Heaven does not determine this. So what is the nature of this thing? The ancients said, "When a house does not have a painting of a Pai Che, it is like having no ghosts at all." If a man has tempered himself and arrived at this principle, he will control everything under heaven with a single sword.
>
> For those who study this, let them not be thoughtless.

There is no established rule for manifesting this great ability.[21] If the "great ability" of the law of this special transmission should manifest itself in front of you, it will do so freely, without the existence of any established rule. And yet it is called the "great ability" because it extends in all the ten directions and is missing from no place by even the tip of a rabbit's hair. An established rule is a law or regulation; there are no laws or regulations such as would mold things concerning the manifestation of this great ability.

Orderly action, contrary action—even Heaven does not determine this.[22] The man who manifests this great ability, whether he would act in an orderly way or a contrary way, is free and without obstacles.

So what is the nature of this thing? indicates confronting someone and asking him what something is in fact.

The ancients said, "When a house does not have a painting of a Pai Che, it is like having no ghosts at all." This is an answer to the preceding question.

The Pai Che has a body like a cow's, a head like a man's, and is an animal like no other known. It eats dreams and misfortunes, and in China they draw a picture of it to put up at the house entrance or to hang on the inner pillars. In short, putting up an illustration of Pai Che is for the purpose of avoiding misfortune.

The person who had no ghosts in his house from the very beginning would not even think about making a picture of Pai Che and hanging it somewhere. This is to say that he who has gained the use of either the orderly or the contrary, since even Heaven cannot determine what is in his mind, completely transcends pain and pleasure. He has misfortunes

in neither body nor home. Because of this, his mind will not hanker after a picture of Pai Che, and his own world will be a thing of beauty.

If a man has tempered himself and arrived at this principle, he will control everything under heaven with a single sword. This means that if one disciplines himself in this way, exhaustively tempering this pure metal a thousand times over, and becomes instantly free like the quick unsheathing of a sword, he should be like the founder of the Han Dynasty, controlling all under heaven with a single sword.

For those who study this, let them not be thoughtless. Those who study the mysterious principle of this sword should not easily take on thoughtless notions, but should strive to heighten their own luster. In intently continuing their own efforts, they should not be negligent, not even for a moment.

3

Yagyu Munenori

SCHOOLS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS began to proliferate during the latter part of the Muromachi period (1336–1568), and many of these claimed inspiration or protection from the gods, Buddhas, and other supernatural forces. Thus they were able to lay claim to transcendental energy, mysterious techniques, and sources beyond ordinary human powers. As noted in the genral introduction, Tsukahara Bokuden of the Shinto-ryu received a "divine decree" at the Kashima Shrine; the founder of the Itto-ryu, Ito Ittosai, had his style revealed to him after seven days and nights' seclusion at the Grand Shrine at Mishima; and Hayashizake Jinsuke, the restorer of iaido, discovered his new Way at the Dewa Tateoka Hayashizake Shrine.

Styles that emphasized such supernatural origins and resultant near-magical abilities, however, eventually began to explain their techniques from a more reasonable standpoint, in time graduating to the principles of psychology. Thus, rather than being enlightened by the authority of a god or spirit, one grasped the principles of swordsmanship by means of his own discipline and depth of self-understanding.

The Yagyu Shinkage-ryu was representative of this trend, and it was Yagyu Muneneori—inheriting the techniques of his father, the artistic and refined Sekishusai, and his father's almost legendary teacher, Kamiizumi Ise no kami Hidetsuna—who deepened and organized the system of psychology and techniques in this school. It is perhaps indicative of the effectiveness of this school that one of its most enthusiastic students was the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu, a man who wasted little time on pursuits that failed to bring practical results.

Munenori wrote the *Heiho kadensho* (translated in English as *The Life-Giving Sword*), the central text of the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu, in 1632 or soon thereafter. The book is at once a prompt for techniques already learned, a text of carefully worded instructions for further practices, a meditative source for sweeping away the psychological obstacles encountered by the student, and a philosophical basis for using the sword as an instrument of life rather than death. A man involved in the political administration of his own local fief and that of the Tokugawa

government, Munenori saw in the practice of the sword a way to forge and temper the student into a total human being; and he defined his objective as one of "sustaining" or "giving life" in a complete sense. The *Heiho kadensho* offers a path of study to that objective through the practice of the sword, the sharp edge of which must learn to express both the blossoming flowers in the spring and the withering of the leaves in the fall.

The philosophy or psychology of the work is largely based on the *Fudochi shinmyoroku* written for Munenori by his friend and mentor, the Zen priest Takuan, and the two books bear a back-to-back reading, each suggesting and illuminating the other. Both Munenori and Takuan emphasize keeping the mind free of attachments, but Munenori defines attachment as "sickness" accrued by too much attention to technique or even to the idea of winning. His cure for such sickness was, paradoxically, even more of the same, used much as a wedge might be used to dislodge another wedge stuck in place. For both men, intense self-discipline and a deep understanding of the principles of Zen are the keys to becoming an "accomplished" man of the Way.

The full *Heiho kadensho* is divided into three chapters: "The Shoe-Presenting Bridge," which is basically a catalog that was presented to the student as certification that he had vigorously studied those techniques; "The Death-Dealing Sword," which goes into some depth about techniques and begins to explain the psychology of the school; and "The Life-Giving Sword," which continues to discuss both techniques and psychology and which ends with a section on the central technique of the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu, the No-Sword.

It should be noted that there are several different levels of the concepts of the Death-Dealing Sword and the Life-Giving Sword. Munenori (and Takuan) presented these terms philosophically in keeping with what their words suggest: the sword can be used to kill but can also be used to preserve or give life. In the latter case, a swordsman should be able to subdue an opponent without killing him, or he may have to kill an evil swordsman and thereby save (give life to) countless others. This is one example of how Munenori's swordsmanship is not meant to be separated from his politics, and thus can be studied as a Way of life.

In regard to pure technique, however, the difference between the two should be understood in a slightly different light. The Death-Dealing Sword is one that meets an opponent head-on in a sense, by overcoming and stifling his technique. It, in essence, "kills" the opponent's sword. The Life-Giving Sword, on the other hand, encourages or leads the opponent to begin a technique—and thus "gives life" to his sword. Then, if possible, it takes that sword away or defeats the opponent in some

other way. This is taking the “initiating initiative”; it is not to be understood as being applicable only to swordsmanship.

These are the basic building blocks upon which Munenori supported his style, without which the disciple might become skilled, but not truly accomplished, regardless of his own natural abilities.

Though the *Heiho kadensho* was the result of Munenori’s deep thoughtfulness, years of meditation, and daily intense practice, he was quick to give credit to those who had influenced and helped him to become one of the great sword masters of his time and the defining head of a school still practiced today. Indeed, he adamantly defined himself by his predecessors, going so far as to sign this pivotal book with first Kamiizumi’s name, then his father’s, and only lastly his own.

Munenori was honored among the daimyo, sought out as a teacher of swordsmanship, and advanced to a political station far beyond that of other sword masters of the time. All in all, he seems to have been a remarkably gifted, intense, and upright man who was, if his friendly relationships with Takuan and Iemitsu are any indication, a congenial companion.

The Life-Giving Sword

活人剣

The Death-Dealing Sword

In ancient times it was said,

> Weapons are instruments of ill omen. The Way of Heaven finds them repugnant. The Way of Heaven is to use them only when necessary.[1]

If you would ask why this is so, it can be said that bows and arrows, swords, and halberds are called weapons, and further that these are instruments of bad fortune and ill omen. The reason for this is that the Way of Heaven is a Way that brings life,[2] while instruments that kill are, on the contrary, truly ill-omened. Thus they are considered repugnant because they are contrary to the Way of Heaven.

Nevertheless, it goes on to say that using weapons and killing people when this cannot be avoided is also the Way of Heaven. If you would ask what this means, it is that flowers bloom and greenery accompanies them in the spring breezes, but the leaves fall and trees wither when autumn frosts arrive. This is the judgment of the Way of Heaven.

There is reason in striking down something that is replete. A man may ride his good fortune and commit evil, but you strike him down when

that evil is replete. Thus, it may be said that using weapons is also the Way of Heaven. There are times when ten thousand people suffer because of the evil of one man. Therefore, in killing one man's evil you give ten thousand people life. In such ways, truly, the sword that kills one man will be the blade that gives others life.

There is an art[3] to using those weapons. If you do not know this art, you may well be killed by the person whom you are trying to kill.

Think about this carefully. In what we are terming the martial arts, you stand off against another individual, both of you using a sword. In this martial art there will be only one person who wins and one person who loses. This is a very small martial art.[4] Although there is a victory and a defeat, the gain and loss will not be much. It is a large martial art when one person wins and the empire wins, or when one person loses and the empire loses. In this case, the "one person" is the general, and the "empire" is the various armed forces. The various armed forces are the hands and feet of the general. Making the various forces function well is making the general's hands and feet function well. When the various forces do not function well, the general's hands and feet do not function well.

In a match with two opposing swords, victory comes to the man who naturally harmonizes Principle and Function,[5] and whose hands and feet work well. In the same way it can be said that the martial art of the great general is in winning a battle by using his various forces well and by skillfully devising stratagems.

It goes without saying that when two opposing armies face one another and victory or defeat is to be determined on the battlefield, a general opposes those two armies in the few square inches of his mind and observes how he will lead his army into battle. This is a martial art performed in the mind.

It is a martial art to be mindful of chaotic times while ruling the country in peace; and it is also a martial art to observe the inner workings of a country, to know what causes chaos, and to rule well before chaos begins.

While you are governing a country, it is yet again a martial art to keep your mind clearly on the farthest corners of the farthest province and to appoint various officials to keep guard over them. Such officials —from the highest to lowest—may have their own selfish agendas, and the suffering of those under them could indeed be the beginning of the country's ruin.

Thus, it is essential that you observe the inner workings of the country and prevent its ruin at the hands of officials with various personal agendas. This is like the martial art of seeing into the intentions of your opponent in a sword match by observing his movements.[6]

You must observe the situation clearly and with great intensity! This is the Great Principle of the martial arts.

Again, a lord may be accompanied by flatterers who, when facing their superior, will put on the appearance of men of the Way; but when regarding their inferiors will flash looks of anger. If one does not curry favor with such men, good deeds will be reported as evil, the guiltless will suffer, and criminals will be praised. Observing this principle is more important than seeing through your opponent's intentions by the movements of his sword.

The province is the lord's province, and the people are the lord's people. Those close to the lord serving as administrators are his vassals, just as are those who serve him from afar. What matters the degree of intimacy? They are like hands and feet for the sake of the ruler. Are the feet different from the hands because they are farther away? If both are equal in concern, will one be more intimate and the other more remote?

Nevertheless, a man close to the lord may plunder those far away, and if the innocent are made to suffer, will they not resent even a lord who is without stain? Those close to the lord are few—no more than five or ten—but those at a distance are many. Now the many may resent the lord and sever their affections toward him, and the few close to the lord may have had their own interests in mind from the beginning. With no thought of true service, those few may govern in such a way as to make the people resent the lord, and at such a time will fight to be the first to distance themselves from him.

It is best to observe this principle well, so that those at a distance will not somehow be at a disadvantage, beyond their lord's blessings. If you observe this principle well, it will become your martial art.

Having no conflicts in association with friends from beginning to end is also a matter of seeing into the principles of a relationship, and this, too, is a martial art of the mind. The mind that looks into the principles of associating with people in a particular setting is a martial art as well. If you do not observe these principles you may overstay yourself at a certain gathering and incur shame for yourself for no real account. Or, by prattling on without observing the sensibilities of the people with whom you are associating, you may invite an argument or even bring yourself to ruin. All of this depends upon either seeing or not seeing into principles.

Arranging objects in your living room is a matter of using what is right for each place, and this, too, is a matter of seeing into the principles of those places. This is not unlike the very heart of the martial arts. Truly, the arena may change, but the principle is the same, and thus you could even apply this to national affairs and make no mistakes.

It is missing the point to think that the martial art is solely in cutting

a man down. It is not in cutting people down; it is in killing evil. It is the stratagem of killing the evil of one man and giving life to ten thousand.

What is written down in these three chapters should not leave this school, but this is not making a secret of the Way. To keep this in secret is for the sake of making it known.[7] Not making it known would be the same as not writing it down. You, my descendants, should think this over well.

The *Great Learning*[8] is the gate for the beginning scholar. For the most part, when arriving at a house you first go in through the gate. The gate is a sign that you have approached the house. Passing through this gate, you enter the house and meet the master. Just so, learning is the gate that approaches the Way. Passing through this gate, you arrive at the Way. But learning is the gate, not the house. Do not look at the gate and think, "This is the house." The house is within, reached only after passing through the gate.

Do not read written works and think, "This is the Way." Written works are like the gate to approach the Way. Thus, there are people who remain ignorant of the Way regardless of how much they have learned and how many Chinese characters they know. Though they face the pages and read as skillfully as though they were annotating the ancients, they are ignorant of the truth and so do not make the Way their own. Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to approach the Way without studying. Still, one cannot say that a man embodies the Way simply because he has studied and speaks well. There are also people who are naturally in harmony with the Way and who have never studied at all.

In the *Great Learning* it says, "Extend your knowledge to all things."[9] To "extend" means to do so exhaustively. Exhaustively extending your knowledge generally means to know men as they are in the world and to exhaustively know the principles of all existing things. To "extend your knowledge," then, is to have nothing said to be unknown. "All things" can also be read as "exhausting all things and events." If you exhaustively know the principles of all things, there is nothing remaining unknown, and nothing that cannot be done.

When you have left no stone unturned in knowledge, you have done the same with all things. But if you do not know the principles, nothing will come of your actions.

If you do not know all things, you still harbor doubts. And when you doubt something, that thing will not leave your mind. If you come to the end of a matter with the principle clearly understood, there will be nothing at all in your mind. This is called exhausting knowledge and exhausting the things of this world.

When there is nothing at all left in your mind, everything becomes

easy to do. The study of all Ways is done for the sake of making a clean sweep of your mind. Because in the beginning a man knows nothing at all, he has nothing at all in his mind.[10] When you begin to study, there is something in your mind; you are obstructed by that thing, and it becomes difficult to do anything at all. If you can clear from your mind those things you have learned, they too will become nothing; and when you perform the techniques of the various Ways, the techniques will come easily regardless of what you have learned and without being contrary to it. When you perform an action you will be in harmony with what you have learned, without even being aware of it.

You should understand that this is the Way of the martial arts. The heart of "extending knowledge" is the discipline of exhaustively learning a hundred methods with the sword and thoroughly mastering the postures, methods of using the eyes, and the other techniques.

When you have run the length of various practices and none of those practices remain in your mind, that very lack of mind itself is the heart of "all things." When you have exhaustively learned the various practices and techniques and made great efforts in disciplined training, there will be action in your arms, legs, and body but none in your mind; you will have distanced yourself from training, but will not be in opposition to it, and you will have freedom in whatever techniques you perform. You yourself will be unaware of where your mind is, and neither demons nor heresies will be able to find it. Training is done for the purpose of reaching this state. With successful training, training falls away. This is the secret principle toward which all Ways progress.

By forgetting about training and casting off your mind, you will be all the more unaware of yourself. The place you come to in this way is the perfection of the Way. At this level, you enter through training and arrive at its very absence.

Ch'i and Will

The mind that takes up its stance within and intently considers a matter is called the will. The will is internal, but when it is manifested externally it is called ch'i.[11] The will can be said to be the master, and ch'i the servant. Will is internal and uses ch'i. If ch'i overruns its bounds, it stumbles. Ch'i is reined in by will, and should not be made to hurry.

In terms of the martial arts, we call will the concentration of the mind from the waist down, and ch'i the giving and receiving of strikes when a match is in progress. The mind should be thoroughly concentrated below the waist and the ch'i should not be driven too precipitously. It is essential to remain calm, so that ch'i is reined in by will, and will is not dragged along by ch'i.

Deception Is the Foundation of the Martial Arts[12]

Deception is strategy. By the false, the truth is obtained.[13] Deception is such that, even when your opponent is aware of it, he cannot help but be taken in. When you use deception and your opponent is taken in, you defeat him by causing him to be taken in. When you see that your opponent has not been taken in, you use yet another deception. Thus even an opponent not initially taken in can be taken in after all.

In Buddhism this is an "expedient means.[14] The truth is hidden within, a ruse is placed without, and in the end one is drawn onto the Path of Truth. In this way, all deception becomes truth. In the Shinto religion, this is called mystery. By the mysterious, men's faith is aroused; and when there is faith there will be divine favor.

In the warrior clans this is called military strategy. Though strategy is deception, it is through deception that victory is obtained without hurting others. This way, deception becomes truth in the end. This is called putting things in order by applying the contrary.

In Zen there is a saying, "Beat the grass and scare up the snake." Just as you beat the grass to scare up the snake that lies within, there is a technique of surprising your opponent to cause his mind to become agitated. Deception is doing something unexpected by your opponent, and surprising him. This is the martial arts.

Once surprised, your opponent's mind will be taken, and his skill undone. Raising your fan or hand in front of him will also take your opponent's mind. Tossing aside the sword you are carrying is also a martial art. If you have attained the skill of No-Sword,[15] what will a sword be to you? Another man's sword is your sword. This is the function of Grasping the Opportunity (*kizen*).[16]

The heart of Grasping the Opportunity is always in grasping the moving power from your opponent. The character ki refers to the ch'i concentrated within one's mind. This ki is ch'i. Observing your opponent's ch'i and moving to meet the opponent before his ch'i can function is Grasping the Opportunity. This action also exists in Zen, as is clear from the phrase "the moving power of Zen."[17]

Ki is the unmanifested ch'i hidden within. As a controlling power it can be likened to the hidden device in a door that allows it to be opened and shut. Acting by an astute observation of this almost unseen[18] and unmanifested ch'i hidden inside is known in the martial arts as Grasping the Opportunity.

On the Words Ken (Attacking) and Tai (Abiding)

Attacking means assaulting intensely: striking the first blow[19] with your sword with all your concentration as soon as you meet your opponent. This attitude is the same, whether it is within your opponent's mind or your own.

Abiding means waiting for your opponent to make the first move, and not making an abrupt attack yourself. You should understand Abiding to mean exercising extreme caution.

Attacking and Abiding: these two mean assaulting and waiting.

The principles of Attacking and Abiding exist in both the body and the sword.

Attack your opponent by closely approaching him with your body and yet holding back with your sword. In this way, you entice him to make the first move with your body and limbs, and defeat him by that enticement. So doing, your body and limbs are Attacking while your sword is Abiding. Putting the body and limbs in Attack is done to cause your opponent to make the first move.

Attacking and Abiding Exist in Both Body and Mind

You should hold the mind in a state of Abiding and the body in Attack. This is because if the mind is in Attack, it will run to excess until the effect is a negative one. Restrain your mind and carry it in Abiding; have your body Attack and defeat your opponent by making him take the first step. If your mind takes the attitude of Attack, you will feel that you must cut your opponent first, and you will suffer defeat.

On the other hand, there is also an understanding of having the mind in Attack and the body in Abiding. The heart of this is in working your mind without negligence. By having your mind in Attack and your sword in Abiding, you cause your opponent to take the first step. In this case, you should understand "the body" to be nothing other than the hand holding your sword. Thus we say that the mind is in Attack and the body in Abiding.

Although these two definitions exist, they ultimately mean the same. Either way, you obtain the victory by having your opponent make the first move.

Lessons on How to Approach an Opponent When He Takes Up Attack

- Two Stars[20]
- Peaks and Valleys[21]
- Distant Plaited Mountains[22]

All these items are ways of observing, or fixing the eyes. The details are transmitted orally.

- The Rhythm of Far and Near[23]
- Body Position and Sensation of the Bead Tree[24]

These two items are concerned with the sword and body posture.

- Making a shield of your fists
- Placing the body sideways
- Keeping your shoulders level with your opponent's fists
- Keeping your rear leg open
- Keeping your stance the same as your opponent's

These five items are concerned with both the body and the sword. Each should be learned while you are engaged in matches. They are difficult to express in written words.

Well, then, the mentality for each of these five items is to fully concentrate your mind below the waist, to be completely attentive, and to have no negligence in your mind before engaging with your opponent. While engaged, your mind should be unwobbling. These things are essential.

If you lack the concentration below the waist and suddenly have to fight, neither the techniques you have learned nor anything else will come to your aid.

Lessons on How to Approach an Opponent When He Takes an Attitude of Abiding

- Two Stars
- Peaks and Valleys
- Distant Mountains

When your opponent has taken a strict attitude of Abiding, these three targets for fixing the eyes should not be abandoned. Simply, these targets for fixing the eyes should be used for both Attack and Abiding; they are essential. You should bear clearly in mind that Peaks is for striking attacks and that Distant Mountains is for exchanging strikes and close-in fighting. Generally, you should always fix your eyes on the Two Stars.

The Three Intents

The Three Intents are nothing other than three observations. They consist of a trial attack of striking, drawing, and waiting.[25] When it is difficult to gauge what your opponent is going to do, you should be able to discern his intentions with these. They are used to sound out the mind of your opponent. For an opponent who has resolutely set himself into an attitude of Abiding, use these three or similar provocations, execute your deception, make your opponent use his own technique, and defeat him.

Adhere to a Change, Follow a Change[26]

The heart of this matter is that if your opponent has taken an attitude of Abiding and you provoke him with a number of changes, your opponent himself will then manifest change.[27] Following that change, you will defeat him.

Manipulating Two Eyes[28]

You should execute various deceptions with an opponent who has taken an attitude of Abiding. While watching what your opponent is doing, you should look when you do not seem to be doing so, and not look when you seem to be looking. Do not be negligent at any moment, and do not set your eyes on any one place but keep them moving steadily and quickly.

In a certain Chinese poem, it is said,

With a pilfered glance,[29] the dragonfly evades the shrike.

A "pilfered glance" means a stealthy look. In order to avoid being caught, the dragonfly looks stealthily in the direction of the shrike and leaps into flight. You should constantly, without negligence, look stealthily at your opponent's actions.

The Mind That Defeats the Opponent
by Allowing Him to Strike

To cut a man with a single blow is easy. To avoid being cut by a man is difficult. Though a man intends to strike you and advances to do so, keep him at a certain interval, above all remain calm and allow him to advance, and then allow him to strike. Thus, even though your opponent has an intention to strike and goes through the motions of striking, if you maintain a certain interval, he will not make contact. The sword that makes no contact is a dead sword. You then go over his dead sword, strike, and defeat him.

Your opponent's first strike has missed, but in return, you take him

with the first strike of your sword.

After you have struck your first blow, be sure to prevent him from lifting his hands again. After you strike, if you vacillate about what to do next, your opponent will surely strike at you with yet another blow. At this point, negligence will equal defeat. You will be struck by your opponent and your first strike will be brought to nothing. This is because your mind stopped at the point you placed your blow. Do not rest your mind at the place you have struck, wondering whether you have cut the man or not. You should strike him a second or third time, and yet a fourth or fifth time, not giving him a chance to even raise his face.

The victory will be determined by the first blow of your sword.

Three Rhythms[30]

One rhythm is when you and your opponent strike at the same time; another is when he raises his sword and you strike from beneath; and a third is when he lowers his sword and you go over it and strike.

The rhythm of striking at the same time is considered to be undesirable,[31] while a rhythm of striking separately is thought to be good. If the strikes are simultaneous, your opponent will be able to use his sword well; but if the strikes are not made at the same moment, he will use his sword poorly. You should strike so that it is difficult for your opponent to use his sword. Whether you attack from below or above, you should strike with No-Beat.[32]

Generally speaking, it is undesirable to maintain a rhythm.

Broad[33] *Rhythm, Short*[34] *Rhythm; Short Rhythm, Broad Rhythm*

If your opponent brandishes his sword and establishes a broad rhythm, you should brandish your sword with a short rhythm. If your opponent establishes a short rhythm, you should use a broad rhythm. This, too, is understood as using a rhythm to keep your opponent out of rhythm. If you maintain a rhythm, your opponent will be able to use his sword well.

A skillful chanter of Noh drama, for example, will perform in such a way as to maintain no particular rhythm, and an unskilled drummer will be unable to play along with him. In the same way that chanting or drumming will be difficult if there is a skillful chanter but a poor drummer, or a skillful drummer but a poor chanter, the combinations of broad-and-short rhythm or short-and-broad rhythm will make it difficult for your opponent to strike.

If an unskillful chanter falls into a broad rhythm, an accomplished

drummer may try to beat lightly with a short rhythm but will be unsuccessful. Again, if a skillful chanter takes up a light beat, a poor drummer will be unable to keep from falling behind.

A skillful birdcatcher will first let the bird see his pole, then shake the pole loosely from his end and, with a smooth approach, capture the bird. The bird is taken in by the shaking rhythm of the pole. Though it flutters its wings again and again, it is unable to take flight and so is caught.

You should act so that you are out of rhythm with your opponent. If the rhythm is upset, he will not even be able to jump over a ditch but will step right into it. You should give careful scrutiny to this kind of mentality.

Being Aware of the Entire Song

For both dance and chanting, you will be unable to perform if you do not know the entire song. You should understand the Entire Song in the martial arts as well. You should especially see through your opponent and ascertain the action of his sword. Know this through to the bottom of his mind and you will have the mind that has memorized the Entire Song well.

If you know the demeanor and action of your opponent well, you will gain freedom in your own devices.

- Counterstriking[35]
- Two or Three Inches between Combatants[36]
- Quickly Stealing the Body[37]
- Checking the *Jodan* Interlace[38]
- Checking the Space between Right and Left during a Wheel Sword Maneuver[39]
- The Three-Foot Interval[40]

These six items will not be learned unless transmitted orally and taught during matches with the master. They are not to be expressed by putting everything down with brush and paper.

There may be occasions when you brandish your sword using various feints and deceptions with techniques such as these, and your opponent, taking a firm attitude of Abiding, will neither be startled nor made to initiate a move. When this occurs, steal within three feet of your opponent and draw up close to his body. When he can bear this no longer, allow him to move to make his first strike, and then strike. If your opponent does not strike, it is likely that you will be unable to defeat him. If your opponent does strike at you, keep the no-contact interval clearly in mind, and he will not be able to strike abruptly at you

again.

Practice this technique well, move close to your opponent without timidity, get him to make the first move, and defeat him. This is the concept of Initiating the Initial Move.[41]

- The Great Distortion[42] and the Feint Attack. This should be orally transmitted.
- Mindfulness:[43] To be maintained in both Attacking and Abiding. This should be orally transmitted.
- Avoiding the Opponent's Sword by Keeping Open a Foot and a Half.[44]
- Engaging Attack and Abiding: You should understand the body in Attack and the sword in Abiding.

All of these items will be difficult to master if they are not transmitted orally and learned during matches with the master.

Listening to the Sound of Wind and Water[45]

The foundation of this Way is always deception.[46] Its wisdom of victory is entirely in attacking with various feints, creating variations, and causing the opponent to make the first move. Even before the fight, you must be resolved that your opponent will attack,[47] and not be negligent. It is essential to maintain your concentration below the waist.

If you do not think your opponent will attack, you will be set upon quickly and severely as soon as the fight begins, and all your daily training and techniques will be for naught. After the attack begins, it is essential to put your mind, body, and legs in Attack, and your hands[48] in an attitude of Abiding. You must look and pay careful attention to Existence.[49] This is the lesson of Grasping Existence. Indeed, if you do not observe this aspect with calm, it is unlikely that your lessons in swordsmanship will be of much use.

Listening to wind and water means tranquillity above and intense activity below. The voice of the wind does not exist, but issues forth when it comes in contact with things. Thus, when it blows high above, it is tranquil; but when it blows below and touches trees, bamboo, and the myriad things, its voice is hurried and loud. Water, too, when falling from above, has no voice; but when it comes in contact with things and falls on what is below, there will be a clattering sound.

Tranquillity is above and intense activity is below. This is to say, the exterior is calm and peaceful, with nothing to invite a second look, while the interior is attentive and free of negligence.

It is undesirable to have the body and the limbs hurry. Attacking and

Abiding[50] should be placed within and without. It is not right to harden into just one of these two. Remember that yin and yang go through their changes mutually. Movement is yang; tranquillity is yin. Yin and yang move—now inside, now out. When yang moves within, the outside is tranquil with yin. If yin is within, yang moves and is manifested outside. The martial arts are like this as well: moving without negligence, activating the ch'i within, and keeping the outside peaceful, with no cause for alarm.

It is in accord with the principle of Heaven that yang moves within and that yin is peaceful without. Moreover, if Attack moves rigorously on the outside, the mind within should remain calm and unaffected by the exterior. In this way, even though the exterior is in Attack, it will not be in disorder.

If both interior and exterior are in motion, there will be disorder. You should make Attacking and Abiding, motion and tranquillity, and interior and exterior all mutual.

The waterbird floats along the surface of the water and, though tranquil above, paddles along on webbed feet below. In the same way, if you are without negligence within and make great efforts with this practice, mind and body will unify, inside and outside will become one, and you will be without hindrance. Reaching this sphere, you will have obtained the very ultimate.

Sickness

To think only of winning is sickness. To think only of using the martial arts is sickness. To think only of demonstrating the result of one's training is sickness, as is thinking only of making an attack or waiting for one. To think in a fixated way only of expelling such sickness is also sickness. Whatever remains absolutely in the mind should be considered sickness. As these various sicknesses are all present in the mind, you must put your mind in order and expel them.

An Understanding of the Two Levels[51] *for Expelling Sickness:* [52] *The Preliminary Level*

"Use thought to arrive at No-Thought; use attachment to be nonattached."[53] The heart of this is that thinking of expelling sickness is itself a thought. The thought of expelling sickness in the mind is "using a thought."[54] It is also called sickness when you are consumed by a thought.

To think of expelling sickness is a thought. However, you may expel thought by the use of thought. When you can leave off thoughts, you will have become void of them.[55] In this way, using thoughts is said to

be No-Thought. If you can expel the sickness of any remaining thoughts with thought, afterward both the thought that has been expelled and the thought with which it was expelled will disappear. This is the same as using a wedge to extract another wedge. If you drive a wedge into the place where another wedge is stuck, the first wedge will loosen and come out. When the first wedge is extracted, the wedge used to loosen it will not remain either.

If you wish to expel sickness, the thought that is used to expel sickness will not remain afterward, and this is called using thought to arrive at No-Thought. The thought of expelling sickness may be an attachment to that sickness, but with that attachment sickness is expelled, and the attachment itself does not remain. This is called using an attachment to become nonattached.

The Profound Level

In the profound level, expelling sickness is in the lack of mind that thinks only of doing so. The thought of expelling sickness is itself sickness. Sickness will be expelled by abandoning yourself to it, and carrying on within its midst.

The thought of expelling sickness will not have results because that thought is in the mind. Thus, the more the sickness remains and the more you become fixated on that thought, the less benefit there will be. How should this be understood?

The answer is this:[56] the preliminary and the profound have been established in two levels for this use. When you train yourself in the preliminary frame of mind and have acquired [sufficient] discipline, the fixation is left behind without even the thought of leaving it.

What is called "sickness" is fixation. In Buddhism, fixation is abhorred. The monk who has left fixation behind, however, can mingle with the dust of worldly affairs and not be stained; he is free in whatever he does, and abides in no one place. Experts in all the Ways can hardly be called masters if, beyond their various techniques, they have not yet severed themselves from fixation.[57]

Dust and dirt will become attached to a rough, unpolished gem. The polished gem, however, will be unblemished even in the midst of the mire. By means of discipline, you polish the jewel of the mind, allowing no blemish; you abandon yourself to sickness, and toss away the mind altogether.

A monk asked an ancient worthy, "What is the Way?" The worthy replied, "Your ordinary mind, that is the Way."[58]

This anecdote contains a principle that runs through all disciplines. When an explanation of the Way is requested, the answer is "your ordinary mind." This is truly profound. Expelling all the sicknesses of

the mind, engendering the ordinary mind, and yet abiding amid sickness . . . this is the state of being without sickness.

Apply this to the world of the arts. When practicing archery, if your mind is occupied by thoughts of shooting the bow, your aim will be disordered and wandering. When using the sword, if your mind is occupied with thoughts of plying the sword, its tip will not likely be regulated. When practicing calligraphy, if your mind is occupied by thoughts of writing, the brush will be unsettled. When playing the koto, if your mind is filled with thoughts of plucking the strings, the melody will be confused.

When the man shooting the bow forgets about the mind that is shooting the bow and releases the string with the ordinary mind he has when doing nothing, the bow will be tranquil. When plying a sword, riding a horse, writing something, or playing the koto, take up the ordinary mind that does none of these or anything at all. Then no matter what you do, you will do it with ease.

No matter which discipline you follow, if you have in your breast one absolute course, it will not be the real Way. The man who has nothing at all in his breast is a real Man of the Way. Having nothing in his breast, when he does something it is done with ease, no matter what arises.

Because a mirror is always clear and has no form within it at all, the form of whatever stands before it will be clearly reflected. The breast of a Man of the Way is like a mirror: it does nothing and is perfectly clear. Thus, he has No-Mind and in all things lacks nothing. This is the ordinary mind. A man who accomplishes everything with this ordinary mind is said to be a master.

In doing any number of things, you hold the mind that does it correctly[59] and do not scatter that mind distractedly. But in doing that one thing with a single purpose, you will do it inconsistently. Just when you think you've done something well once, you do it again, but poorly. Or, if you do something well twice and do it poorly the third time, you may congratulate yourself for doing well two out of three times; but then once again you do poorly and nothing is settled. This is because you do it with a mind occupied with doing something well.

When you have continuously made great efforts and have accumulated discipline without really noticing, you will have left aside the thought of doing things well and will have attained the realm of No-Mind, No-Thought. And this, without really thinking about it and no matter what you do. Your actions will be like the machinations of a wooden puppet. At such a time, you will not be self-conscious and your mind will not be occupied with what you are doing. Thus, in ten out of ten times, your body, hands, and feet will make no mistakes. But if your mind slips in even slightly, you will miss your aim. When you have No-

Mind, you will hit the mark every time.

No-Mind, however, is not a state of having no mind at all. It is simply your ordinary mind.

Like a Man Made of Wood, with Flowers and Birds

"Like a man made of wood, with flowers and birds": these words of Layman P'ang[60] refer to being like a man made of wood facing flowers and birds. Though flowers and birds are right before its eyes, its heart is not moved. This is reasonable, as a man made of wood has no heart. So how can you, a man having a heart, be like one made of wood?

The man of wood is a metaphor. As a human being with a heart, you should not be equivalent to wood. As a human being, you should not be like wood or bamboo at all.

This is not a matter of looking at flowers and newly engendering a mind that is engaged in this activity. What is said here is that one looks with the ordinary mind, with No-Mind.[61] Shooting a bow is not a matter of doing so while newly preparing the mind for such an activity. What is said here is that you shoot with the ordinary mind.

The ordinary mind is said to be No-Mind. If you change the ordinary mind and engender it anew, insofar as the form will be modified, both interior and exterior will move. If you do everything with a wobbling mind, nothing will be as it should. If a man speaks in an unwobbling manner, though it be a single word, he will be praised.[62] The Unmoving Mind of all the Buddhas is truly felt to be admirable.

The Profound Level and this section are helpful in possessing a mind that can expel the sickness of the martial arts.

Maintain the Mind That Releases the Mind

The priest Chung-feng[63] said, "Maintain the mind that releases the mind." This saying has two levels of meaning.

The practice of the first is as follows: if you "release" the mind, do not allow it to become fixated when it reaches its destination, but unfailingly make it return. If you strike once with your sword, do not let your mind stop at that strike, but bring your mind back securely to yourself.[64]

The deeper meaning is this: in releasing the mind, you let it go where it wishes.[65] "Releasing the mind" means letting it go and not letting it stop anywhere. "Maintain the mind that releases the mind" means exactly that, for if the mind is released and always brought back as if in a net, it will not be free. The mind that releases the mind is one that is let go and does not stop. If you maintain such a released mind, your movements will be free.

Even dogs and cats are better raised unleashed. A leashed dog or a leashed cat cannot be raised well.

Those who read the Confucian scriptures become fixated on the word "reverence," or *kei* .[66] When they place this concept above all others and live their whole lives by it alone, they make their minds resemble a leashed cat.

We also have the word "reverence" in Buddhism, and the sutras speak of the "Undisturbed Concentrated Mind."[67] These two would seem to be very close in meaning. You concentrate your mind on one thing, and allow no confusion from any direction. Of course there is also the chanted phrase, "Speaking with reverence is itself the Buddha and all his disciples." And when facing a Buddhist image, one is said to "concentrate on a respectful salutation." None of these differ with the intent of the word "reverence."

Nevertheless, all of these are expedients for pacifying the disturbed mind, and the mind that is well pacified will not need an expedient.

When you intone the name of Lord Fudo[68] you make your posture correct, press your palms together, and contemplate his unmoving form in your consciousness. At this time, the Three Conditions of Karma—body, mouth, and consciousness[69]—are made one and equal, and concentration is undisturbed. This is called the Universalization of the Three Mysteries.[70]

In intent, therefore, these are the same as the word "reverence"; and "reverence" is in harmony with the virtue of the Original Mind.

This condition of the mind, however, lasts only while you are performing the ritual. If you release your palms and stop intoning the Buddha's name,[71] the Buddhist image in your mind disappears, and you return once again to your confused mental state. This is not a totally pacified mind.[72]

The man who has been able to pacify his mind once and for all from beginning to end may not have cleansed the Three Conditions of body, mouth, and consciousness, but he can mingle with the dust of the world and remain unstained. Though he moves through the world all day long, he himself is unmovable. This is like the moon that seems to follow the innumerable waves, yet truly moves not at all. This is the sphere of one who has reached the ultimate of the Buddhist Law.

I write this down as the instructions I received from a Buddhist priest.[73]

The Life-Giving Sword
On the No-Sword

The significance of the term No-Sword is not necessarily in having to

take the sword of your opponent. Nor does it mean taking your own sword in display and making a name for yourself.

No-Sword means not being cut by another, although you yourself have no sword. Certainly the real meaning does not lie in saying, “Let me demonstrate how I can take this!”

If your opponent does not want his sword taken, you should not insist on trying to take it. No-Sword is also in not taking the sword when your opponent has this attitude. A man who is consumed by the thought of not having his sword taken is going to forget the aim of cutting his opponent. And when he thinks only of not having his sword taken, he will probably not cut you.

Not being cut is in itself a victory. Considering it an art to take a man’s sword is not the principle here. The practice is one that a man puts to use when he himself has no sword and does not want to be cut.

What is called No-Sword is not the art of taking a man’s sword; it is being able to use all implements freely. When you have no sword and want to take your opponent’s to use as your own, anything that comes into your hands should be of use. Even if you have only a fan, you should be able to defeat your opponent’s sword. No-Sword is precisely this attitude.

When you have no sword but carry a bamboo staff, and your opponent unsheathes a long sword and attacks, you should be able to handle the bamboo staff and take his sword. But even if you do not take his sword, you should be able to restrain him without being cut. This in itself is a victory.

This frame of mind is the fundamental meaning of No-Sword.

No-Sword consists of neither taking your opponent’s sword nor cutting him. But if your opponent is clearly trying to cut you, his sword should be taken. From the very beginning, however, the fundamental meaning is not the taking of a sword. It is the clear understanding of distance.

There is a certain space between you and your opponent, and you should know the distance that will keep his sword from striking you. If you have a good grasp of this distance, you will not fear the strike of your opponent’s sword; and when you realize that he is going to strike, you can move according to your judgment of that strike.

With No-Sword, you cannot take your opponent’s sword when it is not within striking distance of your body; but you can take it when it is within striking range. In taking it, there is a chance that you will be cut.

No-Sword is the expectation of a match when your opponent carries a sword and you yourself have only your hands to use as weapons. A sword is long, your hands are short, and you will be unable to draw close to your opponent without entering a range in which you might be

cut. Can you exercise enough judgment to match your hands against the opponent's sword? If so, can you anticipate moving beneath the hilt of the opponent's sword when the blade passes your body, and taking hold of his sword in this manner?

The circumstances are crucial and you must not become entangled with the opponent indiscriminately. Nevertheless, you will likely never be able to take your opponent's sword without drawing close to him.

No-Sword is considered an exclusive secret of our style. Body stances, sword positions, the lay of the location, distance, movement, inner workings, sticking close to the opponent, attack, deception—each of these comes from the thought of No-Sword. Thus, it is our essential vision of this art.

Great Potential, Great Function[74]

There is substance[75] and function in all things. When there is substance, there is function. The bow, for example, is substance; drawing back, releasing, and hitting, however, are said to be the functions of the bow. The lantern is substance, while its light is function. Water is substance, and moisture is the water's function. The plum tree is substance, while what are called its scent and color are its functions. The sword is substance; cutting and piercing are its functions.

Thus, Potential is substance. Exterior manifestations and the various workings are called Function. Because the plum tree has substance, flowers bloom from that substance, colors appear,[76] and a scent issues forth. Similarly, Potential is within, while its Function acts without; and in this same line, the various stratagems and deceptions, the stances of Attacking and Abiding, and all the various contrivances of change act externally because Potential is ready within. This is called Function.

"Great" is a word of praise; it is used when speaking of the *Daimyojin*, *Daigongen*, and *Daibosatsu*,[77] and indicates appreciation. Because Great Potential exists, Great Function is manifested.

Zen monks move about with unrestricted freedom, and no matter what they do or say, it all accords with Reason and Principle. This is called both the Great Supernatural Power and the Great Potential, Great Function.

Though it is called Supernatural Power or Supernatural Transformation, it is not a matter of some divine occurrence like a god or demon coming down from the sky and performing wondrous acts. It is simply acting with complete freedom, in all one's actions. The various sword stances, strategies, and deceptions, the handling of all weapons, leaping up, leaping down, taking another's sword with your bare hands, or delivering a kick—all are called Great Function when done with a

freedom beyond the ken of normal instruction.[78]

If Potential is not always maintained within, Great Function is unlikely to become manifest.

Even when seated in a room to which you have been invited, you first look up and then to the right and the left to be aware of anything that might fall on you accidentally. When seated by a door or screen, you bear in mind that they may fall down. Or, when in close attendance upon a member of the nobility or a person of high rank, you remain aware that something unexpected may occur. Even in entering or exiting through a gate, you do not fall into inattention. Constantly keeping these things in mind is Potential.

Because this Potential is always within, in case of an emergency you will be capable of some commendable quick action. This is called Great Function.

When this Potential is not mature, however, Function will not be manifested. Potential will mature and Great Function will issue forth if you continually maintain awareness and accumulate effort in all your disciplines. If Potential coagulates or becomes set, there will be no Function. If it matures, it will spread throughout your entire body and Great Function will occur everywhere: in the hands and feet, in the eyes and ears.

The man who has only practiced the martial arts as usual will not be able to raise a hand against a man of Great Potential and Great Function.

Another matter that should be mentioned is “the stare.” If glared at by a man of Great Potential, your mind will be arrested by that look, and you are likely to just stand there forgetting that you have a hand with which to draw your sword. If you miss the moment by even the blink of an eye, you will suffer defeat.

When a cat stares at a mouse, the mouse will fall off the rafter. The mouse’s attention is caught by the cat’s glare, it forgets the very feet that do its walking, and it falls. Meeting a man with Great Potential is like a mouse meeting a cat.

As one Zen verse has it, “There is no established rule for clearly manifesting Great Function.”[79] “Clearly manifesting” means that the Great Function of a man of Great Potential appears right before your eyes. “There is no established rule” means that a man of this caliber does not in the least adhere to practice and drills. “Rules” means practice, drills, and regulations. Regulations exist in all disciplines, but the man who has reached the deepest principles of his discipline can dispense with them as he pleases. This is complete freedom, and a man of Great Potential and Great Function has freedom beyond the rules.

Potential means having no negligence within, and being in

anticipation of all things. If that continually aware Potential congeals or hardens, however, the mind becomes shackled by Potential and loses its freedom. This is because Potential is not yet mature. It becomes mature through continuous effort, spreads throughout the body, and acts with freedom. This is what is called Great Function.

Potential is ch'i.[80] It is called Potential according to its seat.[81] The mind is the interior, while the ch'i is the entrance. Potential is a pivot, much like the pivot of a door. You should understand that if the mind is the master of the body, it is the person seated within. Ch'i is the entrance door and permits the mind, as master, to come into play outside. The good or evil of the mind is understood only by this Potential's coming to good or evil after having gone outside. When ch'i strictly guards the entrance door, it is called Potential.

A man may push a door on its pivot, go outside, and do either good or evil, or even perform some supernatural act. This, however, depends on the thought given to the action while the door was still shut.

Thus, this Potential is of great importance. If Potential acts and goes outside, Great Function is manifested. At any rate, if you think of it as ch'i, you will not be wrong. The change in name will depend on the location.

Nevertheless, though one speaks of the "interior" and the "entrance," there are no places inside the body definitely termed as such. Both "interior" and "entrance" are words, and this is how people speak. When you start to speak, it can be called the "entrance;" when you come to your conclusion, it can be called the "interior." But in this case, the locations of interior and entrance are not fixed.

A verse by Manorhata[82] goes:

> The mind follows the ten thousand circumstances
> and shifts accordingly;
> It is the shifting that is truly undefined.

This verse is a secret of those who practice Zen meditation. It is recorded here because it contains an essential meaning for the martial arts. However, it is probably difficult for anyone who does not practice meditation to understand.

In the martial arts, the "ten thousand circumstances" means the various actions of your opponent, and your mind will shift with each of them.[83] If your opponent lifts his sword, for example, your mind shifts with that sword. If the sword swings to the right, your mind shifts with it; if to the left, your mind follows. This is the meaning of "it follows all circumstances and shifts accordingly."

The phrase "It is the shifting that is truly undefined" is the core of the martial arts. This is probably best understood as the mind that leaves no

trace, but “is like the white waves left by a moving boat.”[84] They disappear behind, shift forward, and are not detained in the least.

“Undefined” means vague and unseen. This means that the mind is absolutely undetained. If your mind stops in one place, you will be defeated in the martial arts. If it remains in the place to which it has shifted, the results will be merciless.

The mind has neither color nor form, so it cannot be seen by the eye. If it becomes attached and stops, however, it can be observed as it is. It is like white silk: if you dye it red, it becomes red; if you dye it purple, it becomes purple. Imbued with one thing or another, man’s mind will also manifest itself and become visible. If it is allowed to become imbued with boys and young men, this will be seen by others in the end.

If thoughts are within, their tints will be manifest without.[85]

If you attentively watch your opponent’s movements and your mind stops with them, it is likely that you will be defeated in the martial arts. This verse is quoted to remind you not to stop your mind. I have left out the second stanza and not recorded it here. You will learn it in its entirety when you study zazen. For the martial arts, the first stanza will do.

The martial arts are in accordance with the Buddhist Dharma, and have many points in common with Zen. These include in particular an aversion to attachment and an aversion to being detained by things. It is this that is most to the point. It is essential that one not be detained.

The courtesan of Eguchi responded to the priest Saigyo’s[86] poem in this way:

> Having heard you were one
> who rejected this world,
> My thought is only this:
> Do not stop your mind
> in this temporary stay.

In the martial arts, should you not pay special attention to the second half of this verse?

No matter what secret tradition you receive, no matter what technique you use, if your mind is detained by that technique, you will suffer defeat. Your mind should not be detained—whether by the actions of your opponent, by your own actions, or by cutting and thrusting. This is essential.

Abbot Lung-chi[87] once taught the assembled monks and said,

> Do not see the existent pillar as a pillar; do not see the non-existent pillar as a pillar. Expel Existence and Non-Existence altogether, and

make what lies behind them your own.

You should consider these words in regard to all disciplines. I mention them here because a certain wise man[88] noted that they can be thought of in terms of the martial arts.

"The existent pillar and the non-existent pillar" means that just as you can conceive of pillars of existence and non-existence, so can you establish Existence and Non-Existence and Good and Evil in your mind. Placing the concept of Existence in your mind is undesirable, but that of Non-Existence is even more so. To this effect it is said, "Do not see the pillar,"[89] and this is the meaning of "Do not see the pillars of Existence and Non-Existence."

Existence and Non-Existence, Good and Evil, are sicknesses of the mind. If you do not expel these sicknesses from the mind, nothing you do will turn out well. Thus it is said, "Expel Existence and Non-Existence altogether, and make what lies behind them your own." This advocates expelling both Existence and Non-Existence, but continuing to live in the midst of them and advancing to the level of the ultimate.

Even for one accomplished in the Buddhist Dharma, this eye that is independent of Existence and Non-Existence[90] is difficult to obtain.

> You should toss away the Law.
> How much more so the False Law!

The heart of these sentences is that the "Law" means the True Law of Reality. And even though it may be the True Law, it should not stop in your mind once you have become enlightened. This is what is said in "You should toss away the Law." After you have become enlightened to the True Law, if you keep it in your mind, it becomes rubbish. This is what is said in "How much more so the False Law!" You should toss away the True Law. How much more so should a False Law not be kept in your breast!

Action is accomplished with full insight into all principles, lightly throwing those principles off, and letting none remain in the mind. It is accomplished by keeping the mind empty, and by keeping it ordinary and nothing special. If you do not reach this level, it will be difficult to call yourself accomplished in the martial arts.

Because our clan is involved in the martial arts, I have spoken of this in conjunction with them; but it should not be restricted to the martial arts alone. All Ways[91] are like this.

In the martial arts it is a sickness if you do not leave the mind of the martial arts behind. In archery it is a sickness if you do not leave the mind of archery behind. If you will only use your ordinary mind and take up the sword or draw the bow, archery will not be difficult and the

sword will be used with freedom.

Not being surprised by anything, the ordinary mind will be good for everything. If you lose your ordinary mind, your voice will shake no matter what you are trying to say. If you lose your ordinary mind, your hand will shake when you try to write something in front of others. The ordinary mind is in leaving nothing whatsoever in your breast, lightly tossing off all traces, and leaving the breast empty. This is the ordinary mind.

Those who read the Confucian classics do not understand the principle of the ordinary mind, but are carried away with the word “reverence.” The heart of the word “reverence” is not the highest principle. It is a discipline that is only the first or second rung of the ladder.[92]

4

Miyamoto Musashi

Shinmen Musashi no kami Fujiwara no Genshin, as Miyamoto Musashi was officially known, was one of Japan's most talented renaissance men: its greatest swordsman, an artist, a calligrapher, a sculptor, a metallurgist, a castle town planner, a garden designer, and a writer. Portrayed in classical Noh drama, the character Musashi defeats vengeful ghosts; in prints he rides Ahab-like on the back of a whale about to deliver a fatal blow, or fights sword masters who died half a century before he was born; and in the tales of the professional storytellers, he is a man of unimaginable skills. In modern fiction, he has been the hero of a number of novels, manga, countless movies, and at least two yearlong television series. Two towns claim themselves as his birthplace, and many others will tell you that "Musashi slept here." We are still left to wonder, "Who, really, was this man?"

Musashi's famous work, *The Book of Five Rings,* is considered to be the culmination of two years of meditative thought as he struggled to put his style and philosophy into words. Along with Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, it is one of the books most widely read by martial artists around the world, and it has been translated into a number of foreign languages. It has been touted as a book studied by every successful businessman in Japan—a sort of condensed MBA text, and is the declared bedside book of a famous Japanese baseball player who, as of this writing, pitches for a major-league American team.

Scholars still argue today, however, whether his swordsmanship was based on natural prowess or psychological acumen and whether the victories over famous swordsmen his reputation rode upon were real or just a sham. As for *The Book of Five Rings,* there are those who see it simply as a prompt for the few disciples he taught or as a self-aggrandizing "legacy" to seal his reputation.

It is perhaps difficult to write a factual biography of Miyamoto Musashi, not because of the lack of documents about the man but because of the plethora of contradictory records concerning his life and whereabouts.

Sifting through the most likely unprejudiced evidence, however, a bare-bones history might be as follows.

In *The Book of Five Rings,* Musashi states that he was born in the province of Harima, but there is some evidence that he came from the village of Miyamoto, in Mimasaka. Neither claim can be proved. The date of his birth is unclear, but according to his own account, he was born in 1584. His father, Shinmen Munisai, with whom he did not get along, maintained a dojo where he taught several of the martial arts, including swordsmanship, *jitte*, and an early form of jujutsu. Munisai remarried a number of times, and Musashi lived alternately with his mother, father, and uncle from the time he was young. When Musashi was thirteen, he fought and defeated a swordsman of the Shinto style, Arima Kihei, using only a six-foot staff against Kihei's very real sword. His second match and subsequent victory was at the age of sixteen, when he defeated a martial artist from Tajima by the name of Akiyama. It is said that he joined the Toyotomi forces (which lost) at the historically decisive Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, but this, too, is uncertain. Then, at the age of twenty-one, Musashi went to Kyoto and fought a series of engagements with the Yoshioka clan, which held the position of martial arts instructor to the Ashikaga shoguns in that city. After maiming the eldest brother with a wooden sword and killing the second brother, Musashi fought off a large group of Yoshioka disciples who tried but failed to take revenge. It is said that during this fight, in which his opponents may have numbered as many as sixty men, Musashi's eyes were opened to the Two Heavens, or Two-Sword Style.

Leaving the Yoshiokas in disarray, Musashi traveled between the Kyoto area and Edo (modern Tokyo), meeting and defeating a number of martial artists—including experts with the spear, fivefoot staff, sword, and sickle and chain—as he went.

In April of 1612, Musashi left Kyoto and traveled to Kokura in northern Kyushu. There he sought out one of his father's former disciples, now a senior official with the Kokura fief, in order to gain permission to have a match with Ganryu Sasaki Kojiro. Kojiro was employed as a sword teacher to the Hosokawa clan and was famous for his long Drying Pole sword and Swallow Style. This famous match was held on a small lonely island, variously called Funashima or Mukaijima, and after the match, Ganryushima. Tradition has it that as Musashi was being rowed to the island, he carved a wooden sword from an extra oar, and it was with this "sword" that he quickly brained his unfortunate opponent. Kojiro did not survive the blow, although there are several versions as to how exactly the match took place. Most agree, however, that Musashi had made the man wait for some time, forcing him to lose his composure, and hence his life.

According to some accounts, Musashi next surfaced in 1615 to take part in the military action at Osaka Castle, the final fall of the Toyotomi clan. After that he seems to have set out through the northern provinces, where he took on his disciple, Iori, who later became his adopted son. He then returned to Nagoya in Owari, where he played *go* and drank sake with the famous swordsman and instructor to the Tokugawa family in Nagoya, Yagyu Hyogonosuke. From there he continued his peripatetic lifestyle, touring a number of other provinces, engaging in matches with other martial artists.

In 1634, Musashi traveled again to Kokura, now under the authority of Ogasawara Tadazane, and stayed a number of years. In 1637, he participated in the attack on Hara Castle during the Shimabara Rebellion, during which he received several wounds. Having returned once again to Kyoto for recuperation, he is said to have met Hosokawa Tadatoshi, the master of Kumamoto Castle, at a literary group in 1640 and to have been invited by the latter to stay as a guest with his own residence in the castle town. After some time, Musashi accepted and continued to practice and teach his martial arts there.

In February of 1641, at the request of Lord Hosokawa, Musashi wrote down the *Thirty-Six Articles of the Martial Arts*, a document in outline form from which he would eventually write *The Book of Five Rings*. Tragically, Tadatoshi passed away shortly afterward at the age of fifty-four, dashing Musashi's hopes for an official endorsement of his style. Thus began a period when the famous swordsman concentrated increasingly on poetry, tea, painting, and sculture.

In 1643, Musashi may have felt the intimations of what was to be a fatal disease. On October 10th of that year, in an act of purification, he "climbed Mount Iwato in the province of Higo on the island of Kyushu, bowed in veneration to Heaven, worshipped Kannon, and stood before the Buddha." He then settled into the Reigan Cave, and began to compose *The Book of Five Rings*. This he would complete after two years of meditation on his experiences.

Around the springtime of 1645, his disease, which is thought to have been some form of thoracic cancer, gradually worsened, and, ensconcing himself in his cave, he waited patiently to die. The Hosokawa clan regents were unwilling to let him meet such an end, however, and he was returned to his residence near the castle, where he could be looked after by his disciples.

On May 19, 1645, Miyamoto Musashi died at his residence, by most accounts, at the age of sixty-two. A requiem was given soon after by the priest Shunzan, with whom Musashi had studied Zen. It is said that as the priest intoned the sutras, the sky suddenly clouded over and there was an enormous clap of thunder. Thus it was known that the great

swordsman had passed away.

Musashi wrote *The Book of Five Rings* at the end of his life as a guidebook for the disciples he had taught face to face. It is a broad outline, in a sense, of work he had done with them over a period of years, a reminder to guide them and their disciples after he was gone. Still, it resonates today in matters not only of conflict but in any numbers of life situations.

Though the vehicle of this book is technique, its essence is mind. To Musashi, the martial arts were an approach, or psychology, to the Way. They were not something to be bought and sold, as so many of the martial arts schools both then and now make them out to be, nor were they something to decorate one's life. Conflict is real. The Way is real. The student must use his or her real experience to resolve the two. And it is mind, far more than technique, that will be the enabler. Musashi insisted on the importance of real experience, and the reader should not miss the fact that the phrase, "You should investigate this thoroughly," is repeated more than any other in the book.

The Book of Five Rings

五輪書

From "The Earth Chapter"

For those who would study my martial art, there are rules for putting it into practice:

1. Think without any dishonesty.
2. Forge yourself in the Way.
3. Touch upon all of the arts.
4. Know the Ways of all occupations.
5. Know the advantages and disadvantages of everything.
6. Develop a discerning eye in all matters.
7. Understand what cannot be seen by the eye.
8. Pay attention to even small things.
9. Do not involve yourself with the impractical.

Generally speaking, you should put your mind to these principles in this manner and train yourself in the Way of the Martial Arts. In this Way alone, if you do not take a broad field of vision toward what is true, it will be difficult to become an accomplished martial artist. If you are able to learn these rules, it will be a Way in which you should not be

defeated, even alone against twenty or thirty opponents. If you will first and foremost keep your attention unfailingly on the martial arts and exert yourself in the correct Way, you will defeat others with a strike of the hand or overcome others by the power of perception. Again, if through your training you can freely move your entire body at will, you will defeat others with this body. And if your mind becomes trained in this Way, you will defeat others with your mind. Extending yourself this far, how could this be a Way for your own defeat?

Again, as a martial art for large numbers, this Way will excel in supplying good men as soldiers and in using numbers of those men; it will excel as a Way to carry yourself correctly; and it will excel in regulating the country, in maintaining the people, and in establishing order in society. You will know how not to fall behind others in any of the other Ways, how to help your own self, and how to establish your reputation. This is the Way of the Martial Arts.

From “The Fire Chapter”

In the martial arts of the Two-Sword Style, I compare battle to fire. Thus I have written about the matter of contest in battle as “The Fire Chapter.”

First of all, everyone in this world fancies the insignificant principles of the martial arts, whether in knowing how to give the wrist a three- to five-inch advantage with the fingertips, or in understanding how to gain the victory by extending the forearm by handling a fan. Or again, by taking up a bamboo sword or something like it, all may study the simple advantage of speed and, in learning the functions of the hands and feet, specialize in the lesser advantages of alacrity.

In my martial art, you put your life on the line many times by engaging in battle, you distinguish the principles of life and death, you study the Way of the Sword, you know the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent’s striking sword, you discern the Way of the edge and back of the sword blade, and you practice how to strike and defeat your opponent. In doing this, you do not bother your thoughts with insignificant or small matters.

Above all, when it comes to the principles of bracing yourself with the six kinds of armor, you will not be thinking of insignificant techniques. Moreover, my Way of the Martial Arts is to know the Way of victory with certainty when you are fighting for your life alone against five or ten men. Accordingly, what kind of difference can there be in the principles for one man defeating ten and in those for one thousand men defeating ten thousand? You should investigate this thoroughly.

Nevertheless, gathering one thousand or ten thousand men and

studying this Way is not something that can be done during ordinary times of practice. But if you only take up your sword on your own, by gauging each opponent's strategy and getting to know his strengths and weaknesses, and by virtue of your knowledge of the martial arts, you will plumb the depths of defeating ten thousand men and become an expert in this Way.

Who in this world can obtain my correct Way of the Martial Arts? Whoever would get to the heart of it, let him do so with conviction, practicing in the morning and training in the evening. After he has polished his techniques and gained independent freedom of movement, he will naturally gain miraculous powers, and his free and easy strength will be wonderful. This is the spirit wherein, as a warrior, he will put these practices into action.

Concerning Place

In distinguishing the conditions of the place (of combat), the sun should be at your back. You should take up your stance with the sun behind you. If, according to the place, there is a time when you are unable to put the sun at your back, you should try to put it to your right side. It is the same even if you are in a room: the light should be behind you or to your right. You want to take your stance with no obstruction behind you, with your left side at ease, and so that you have closed off the right. To have your opponent visible even at night, you should take up your stance with the same understanding: fire should be at your rear, light should be off to your right. For looking down on your opponent, you should consider taking your stance in a slightly elevated place. In a room, you should think of the seat of honor as the elevated place.

As for chasing your opponent about in battle, it is essential that you chase him to your left, that you get the difficult terrain to his rear, and that you then drive him, above all, toward those difficult places. In regard to such difficult places, do not let your opponent assess the situation; keep his face from being able to turn by attacking and checking him, leaving no moment unguarded. Even in a room, you should likewise drive your opponent toward the threshold, the lintel, the door, the *shoji* [paper screen sliding door], the veranda, or pillars without letting him evaluate the place.

In any case, when you drive your opponent before you, do so toward a place where there is difficult footing or some sort of obstruction at his side. It is important that you be intent to use the advantages of the place, and so gain the victory with the place itself. You should investigate this thoroughly and put it into practice.

Taking the Three Initiatives

- The Initiative of Attack is when I attack my opponent.
- The Initiative of Waiting is when my opponent attacks me.
- The Body-Body Initiative is when both my opponent and I attack at the same time.

These are the Three Initiatives. In the beginning of any confrontation, there are no other initiatives than these three. You can quickly gain the victory according to the circumstances of these initiatives, and so they rank first in the martial arts. There are various distinctions involved with these initiatives, but you select your own according to the moment. And, as you will be victorious by seeing into your opponent's mind and by the wisdom of the martial arts, I will not write down all the details.

First, in the Initiative of Attack, when you consider attacking, remain calm, then suddenly attack first and quickly. This is an initiative in which you move your body with speed and strength, but leave plenty of margin in your mind. Moreover, while your mind is using great strength, your feet will move a little more quickly than usual. Thus, the initiative is quick and vigorous as you approach your opponent. Again, unfetter your mind and, from beginning to end, be intent on one thing: smashing your opponent. By this, your mind will be strong to its very core, and you will gain the victory. This is, in all events, the Initiative of Attack.

Second, in the Initiative of Waiting, when your opponent attacks you, stay completely unruffled, but show a weak appearance and, as he comes close, move away briskly. Looking as though you are now ready to leap away, watch for the moment he relaxes, then take the victory directly and vigorously. This is one initiative. Another is when your opponent attacks and you come on even more strongly. Here, gain the victory immediately by taking advantage of the moment his rhythm changes. These are the principles of the Initiative of Waiting.

In the Body-Body Initiative, as your opponent attacks quickly, you advance calmly but with strength; and as he approaches, your entire being quickly becomes resolved. When you see him waver, take the victory directly and with strength. Again, when your opponent attacks calmly, you attack a little more quickly, but with light and almost floating movements. When he approaches, complicate the movement a little, follow his expression, and vigorously take the victory. This is the Body-Body Initiative.

This subject is difficult to write about in detail, but you should make great efforts in what I have written down here.

These Three Initiatives are used according to the moment in time and the principles involved. And, although they are not always concerned

with your making the initial attack, you want to attack first and drive your opponent before you if possible. In any case, using the wisdom of the martial arts, taking the initiative is surely at the heart of gaining the victory. You should practice this thoroughly.

Pressing Down the Pillow

Pressing Down the Pillow means not letting your opponent's head up. In the Way of Martial Arts combat, it is wrong to let your opponent lead you around or push you into a defensive position. Above all, you want to move him around freely. Therefore, as both you and your opponent are going to be mindful of this, it will be difficult for you to do if you do not perceive what he is going to do.

In the martial arts, you do such things as check your opponent's strike, suppress his stabs, and break away from grappling. In what is called Pressing Down the Pillow, you grasp my True Way and, when in a confrontation, see through the indications of what your opponent is going to do regardless of his actions. When he is going to strike, before the word "strike" could even be pronounced, be intent on suppressing him and prohibit the rest of his action.

This is the heart of Pressing Down the Pillow. In "attack," for example, suppress your opponent at the letter *a*; for "leap," suppress him at the letter *l*; for "cut," suppress him at the letter *c*. This is all done with the same understanding.

In the martial arts, when your opponent is going to use some technique on you, it is important that you let him do it if it's a useless one. But, if his action is functional, suppress it and keep him from completing it.

The mind that thinks "suppress this, suppress that" about an opponent's actions is also a mind on the defensive. First, no matter what you are involved in, entrust yourself to the Way and, while the execution of a technique is still in play, suppress what your opponent might think of doing even before the first letter of the word could be pronounced. Sustain your action over your opponent so that anything he does comes to nothing. Thus you will be an expert and forged in the martial arts. You should investigate Pressing Down the Pillow thoroughly.

Ferrying Across

Ferrying Across is like crossing the sea. When you traverse a strait or make a long crossing of the sea, for a distance of even forty or fifty *ri*, you use "ferrying." In passing through this human world, too, there are likely many places within the space of a generation that may be called

Ferrying Across. On a ship's course, you know where these places are, you know the capacity of the ship, and you know the weather patterns well. Though other ships may not venture out, you do so by responding to the conditions of the hour, relying on either a crosswind or a tailwind and, if the wind changes, putting in the oars for two or three *ri*. With your mind set on arriving at port, you board the ship and ferry across.

You should think in terms of Ferrying Across when you pass through society and set your mind on some serious affair.

For the martial arts, Ferrying Across is essential even in the midst of battle. Here you take into account the level of your opponent, judge your own degree of expertise, and, using the principles of the martial arts, ferry across. It is the same for a good mariner ferrying across a sea route.

After Ferrying Across, you again feel at ease. In Ferrying Across, you will generally gain a quick victory by bringing out the weaknesses in your opponent and taking the initiative yourself.

The intent to ferry across is essential in the martial arts whether your opponents are one or many. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Knowing Conditions

In the main current of the martial arts, Knowing Conditions means knowing where your opponents flourish or fall, knowing the number of their allies, taking in the lay of the land, clearly observing your opponents' conditions, and—according to the maneuvering of your own allies and these principles of the martial arts—grasping the way of victory with certainty, understanding the degree of initiative to be taken, and going into battle.

Even in solitary combat, it is essential that you discern your opponent's style, see through the character of his allies, detect his strengths and weaknesses, understand how to take him by surprise, know well the scale of his rhythm along with the rhythm of his space and time intervals, and take the initiative. Knowing Conditions is being absolutely able to make assessments when your own intellect is strong.

As you gain freedom in the martial arts, you should be able to fathom your opponent's mind well, and thus have many ways of victory. You should make efforts in this.

Stepping on the Sword

First, in martial arts on a grand scale, when our opponents fire bows and guns at our troops and then commence battle in whatever way, they first fire their weapons and then charge. If we *then* notch arrows to our bows and put powder into our firearms, it will be difficult to push through to

their camp. The heart of Stepping on the Sword, something used principally in the martial arts, is that even with bows and firearms, you must act quickly *while* they are being discharged: if you charge quickly, it will be difficult to notch another arrow to a bow or discharge a firearm. In all things, when your opponent sets up a tactic, respond to it immediately according to its own principles and, stepping on his actions, defeat him.

Again, in the martial arts of one-on-one combat, if you strike only after your opponent has struck with his sword, the fight will become that of one beat after another, and you will make no progress. The idea of stepping on your opponent's striking sword with your foot is to defeat him the moment he strikes, preventing him from striking a second time.

Stepping should not be limited to your feet, but whether doing so with your body, mind, or, of course, your sword, you should be intent on not giving your opponent a second chance. This is, therefore, the mind of taking the initiative in everything. It does not mean attacking at the same time as your opponent. Stepping on the Sword is taking your action immediately upon your opponent's action. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Knowing Collapse

Collapse is common to all things. The collapse of a house, the collapse of a body, the collapse of your opponent—all of them, according to the moment, are collapses from a discordance of rhythm.

In martial arts involving large numbers, it is essential to grasp the rhythm of your opponents' collapse and to hasten your offensive so that they cannot escape that moment. Escaping that moment of collapse, they will likely recover.

Again, in the martial arts of one-on-one as well, you grasp the moment of collapse in your opponent's changing rhythm during the fight. If you are negligent enough to miss this, he will recover and begin anew, and you will make no progress.

It is essential that you grasp the sign of your opponent's collapse and rush him with certainty so that he will be unable to recover. Your rushing attack must be instantaneous and strong, and you must cut him down with such vigor that he cannot recover. You should understand this "cutting down with vigor" thoroughly. If you miss this action, your mind is shilly-shallying. You should put effort into this.

Becoming Your Opponent

Becoming Your Opponent means thinking as though your body has become that of your opponent. When you look at the world, people are

apt to think that someone who has committed a robbery and has holed himself up in a house must be a strong opponent. But if you consider it from the opponent's view, he is thinking that the whole world is against him and that there is no way of escape. The man who has holed himself up in a house is a pheasant. The man who is going in to cut him down is a hawk. You should make thorough efforts in this.

Even in martial arts confrontations involving large numbers, you will be failing in something important if you think of your opponents as strong. If you have a good number of men, understand the principles of the martial arts well, and believe deeply that you are going to defeat your opponents, there should be nothing to worry about.

In the martial arts of one-on-one as well, you should think in terms of Becoming Your Opponent. If he thinks you have understood the martial arts well, that you are strong in technique and that you are an expert in the Way, he is surely thinking that he is going to lose. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Letting Go of Four Hands

Letting Go of Four Hands comes into play when both you and your opponent are of the same mind, you feel as though the fight has come to a stalemate, and you are making no progress. Thinking you have come to a stalemate, you should know enough to discard the situation immediately and gain the victory by some other method. Even in martial arts situations involving large numbers, if you are only intent on grappling, you will make no progress and will inflict injury on your allies. It is important to quickly disregard whatever you are thinking and gain the victory by some method unthought of by your opponent.

Again, even in the martial arts of one-on-one, when you think you've come to a situation of Four Hands, it is essential to change your thinking immediately, assess your opponent, and understand how to gain the victory by another method. You should understand this thoroughly.

Moving the Shadow

Moving the Shadow is used when you cannot see through your opponent's mind. Even in martial arts situations involving large numbers, when you cannot see through your opponents' situation in any way, act as though you were going to attack vigorously, and you will see their intentions. Once you have seen their intentions, it is an easy thing to take the victory by another method.

Again, in martial arts situations of one-on-one, when your opponent has taken a stance with his sword behind him or to his side, if you make a sudden movement as if to strike him, his thoughts will be manifested

with his sword. Knowing these manifestations, you will immediately perceive a method and should know victory with certainty. If you are negligent, you will miss the rhythm. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Controlling the Light

Controlling the Light[1] is applicable when you can see through your opponent's mind as he makes his attack. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, you control your opponents' tactics as they are about to execute them. If you show them that you will control their methods with strength, they will be controlled by that strength and change their minds. You can also change your mind, take the initiative from the mind of Emptiness and take the victory.[2]

Even in a martial arts situation of one-on-one, you check your opponent's strong intentions by the rhythm of your own tactic: grasp a method of victory in his checked rhythm and take the initiative.

Drawing Your Opponent In

Being drawn in is something common to all things. Becoming sleepy is infectious, just as yawns and such are infectious. Time, too, is infectious. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, when your opponents show themselves to be skittish and hurried, you should give an appearance of being not at all affected by this, and rather move all the more leisurely. Your opponents will then be caught up by your actions and will show signs of slackening. When you think they have been drawn in by this, attack quickly and vigorously from the mind of Emptiness and you will gain the victory.

Even in martial arts situations of one-on-one, if you act slowly with body and mind, and then catch the moment when your opponent slackens, you can take the initiative vigorously and quickly, and defeat him. This is an important point.

"Making them drunk" is something that resembles this. So are the mentalities of boredom, skittishness, and weakening. You should make great efforts in this.

Agitating Your Opponent

There are many kinds of agitation. One is a feeling of danger, a second is a feeling that something is beyond your capability, and a third is a feeling of the unexpected. You should investigate this thoroughly.

In martial arts situations involving large numbers, it is essential to agitate your opponents. It is essential that you attack violently when

your opponents are not expecting it. Take advantage of the situation while their minds are unsettled, grasp the initiative, and gain the victory.

Again, even in the martial arts of one-on-one, show leisureliness in the beginning, then suddenly attack vigorously. Following through on your opponent's agitation, you can take the advantage without missing a beat and grasp the victory. This is essential. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Imposing Fear

Fear resides in all things, and the heart of fear is in the unexpected. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, you do not frighten your opponents with what is right before their eyes. People may be frightened by the voices of things, or they may be frightened by making the small seem large. Something frightening coming suddenly from the side also induces fear. You should grasp the rhythm of fear and gain victory by using its advantages.

Even in the martial arts of one-on-one, you can frighten an opponent with your body, you can frighten him with your sword, and you can frighten him with your voice. It is essential to do this suddenly, when your opponent is not expecting it. Take advantage of his fear and gain the victory immediately. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Entangling

Entangling is when you and your opponent have approached each other and clashed vigorously, and you can see that the fight is going nowhere. It is essential that at that point you immediately intertwine yourself with your opponent and, while being mixed up with him, take advantage of the situation and gain the victory.

Whether in martial arts situations involving large numbers or one-on-one, when you and your opponent are set off and then clash with mutual intent but no victory is at hand, it is important to mix in with your opponent immediately, making sure that you cannot become disentwined. Then, seize the advantage of that situation, understand how you can win on the spot, and take the victory vigorously. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Touching the Corner

Touching the Corner refers to the difficulty of forcing your way directly when pressing against anything strong. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, assess the number of your opponents, hit the

corner of the place where they have struck out vigorously, and you should be able to grasp the advantage. As that corner begins to lose strength, so will the entire body. It is essential that, as that strength fails, you grasp the victory by staying intent on that corner.

Even in the martial arts of one-on-one, inflict a wound on a corner of your opponent's body and, as his body grows a little weaker and begins to slump, victory will be an easy matter. You should investigate this matter thoroughly. It is important in discerning the victory.

Causing Confusion

Causing Confusion means acting so that your opponent's mind becomes uncertain. In martial arts situations involving large numbers on the battlefield, gauge your opponent's mind and, with the strength of your own wisdom in the martial arts, send his mind in different directions, make him think various things, and have him wonder if you will be slow or quick. When you grasp the rhythm of his confusion, discern your point of victory with certainty.

Again, in the martial arts of one-on-one, seize the moment and execute various techniques, feigning strikes and stabs and rushing in. When you see the signs of your opponent's confusion, take the victory freely. This is a specialty of battle. You should investigate this thoroughly.

The Three Voices

The Three Voices are divided and called the beginning, middle, and latter Voices. Shouting is essential according to the situation. Voice adds the element of energy, so people shout at fires, great winds, and large waves. Voice manifests vigor.

In martial arts situations involving large numbers, the shouts at the beginning of the battle are given as vigorously as possible to intimidate your opponents; the shouts in the middle of the battle lower the pitch and are given from the very depths; and, after defeating your opponents, another great shout is given vigorously. These are the Three Voices.

Again, even in the martial arts of one-on-one, you feign a strike and yell "*Ei!*" at the very beginning in order to incite your opponent to move. You then strike with your sword after you have yelled. Again, the yell you give after you have struck your opponent is an expression of victory. These are called the Beginning and Latter Voices.

You do not give a great yell at the same time you strike with your sword. If you yell during a battle, it is done with a low voice in order to ride its rhythm. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Mixing In

Mixing In occurs in battles with large numbers, when the troops have clashed and you see that your opponent is strong. You mix in when you attack one point of your opponents and, seeing that it has collapsed, you leave it and strike at other strong points. Generally, the heart of this is in zigzagging attacks.

In the martial arts on a smaller scale, this mentality is essential for when you are facing a group alone. Do not simply defeat one single opponent, but rout one after another, always attacking another strong opponent. Grasp one man's rhythm and, with your own good rhythm, zigzag to the left and right, attacking as you read your opponent's expression. When you grasp your opponent's condition and rush in, be intent on taking the victory vigorously without the least bit of a retreat.

This mentality is also for when you clash with a single strong opponent. The heart of Mixing In is in not knowing a single step of retreat and in getting lost in the crowd.

Crushing

Smashing your opponent completely, even if he seems weak and you are strong, is called Crushing. This mentality is important. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, when you perceive that your opponents are few in number—or even, should they be numerous—once you have confused them and found their weaknesses, you crush them. In other words, from the very beginning, you are intent on intimidating them and crushing them completely.

If your Crushing is weak, they will be able to rally. The heart of this is to grasp what you have in hand and crush them. You should understand this thoroughly.

Again, when you are in one-on-one martial arts situations, if your opponent is inferior to you, or his rhythm has broken, or if he appears as though he is going to retreat, it is essential that you crush him immediately, without letting him catch his breath or even letting him glance at you. It is your primary consideration to not let him recover even a little. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Mountains and Seas

The heart of Mountains and Seas is that it is wrong to use the same tactic repeatedly during a fight between you and your opponent. Using the same tactic twice is unavoidable, but you should not use it three times. If you use a technique on your opponent and it is not successful the first time, it will have no effect to attack him once more with the

same move.

Attack suddenly with a different technique, and if that has no effect, you should use yet a different one. Thus, if your opponent is thinking "mountains," attack with "seas"; and if he is thinking "seas," attack with "mountains." This is the heart of the Way of the Martial Arts. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Piercing the Bottom

In fighting your opponent and using the principles of this Way, there may be times when you appear to be winning on the surface, but hostility remains in your opponent's mind. Accordingly, he may be defeated on the surface but not at all in the bottom of his mind. In such situations, it is important that you suddenly adjust your own mind, destroy your opponent's spirit, and make sure that he has been defeated in the very bottom of his heart.

This Piercing the Bottom can be done with the sword, the body, or the mind. It cannot be defined sweepingly.

When your opponent has collapsed from the bottom of his heart, it is not necessary for you to remain intent; but if he has not, you must remain alert. It will be difficult for your opponent to collapse completely if something remains in his mind.

For the martial arts of both large numbers and one-on-one, you should practice Piercing the Bottom thoroughly.

Renewal

When you and your opponent are fighting and nothing is going right, nor is there progress, be of a mind to throw off your former intention and start entirely anew. Take on another rhythm and see your way to victory. With Renewal, whenever you think that you and your opponent are just grating along, you should change your mind on the spot and take the victory by using another tactic.

In martial arts involving large numbers, as well, it is essential to discern a point of Renewal. It is a matter of using your strength of knowledge of the martial arts and seeing through things immediately. You should investigate this thoroughly.

Head of a Rat, Neck of a Bull

Head of a Rat, Neck of a Bull applies when you are in battle with your opponent and you are both entangled in concentrating on the finer details, yet you feel that you are going nowhere.[3] In the Way of the Martial Arts, you must consider Head of a Rat, Neck of a Bull constantly

and repeatedly. No matter how engrossed in the details you are, you should suddenly show great heart and exchange the great and the small. This is one of the dispositions of the martial arts.

It is essential for the warrior, even the ordinary soldier, to think in these terms. You should never depart from this mentality, whether in martial arts involving great numbers or in those of one-on-one. You should investigate this thoroughly.

The General Knows the Soldiers

In order to fulfill your intentions, and regardless of what kind of fight you may be involved in, you must always put into practice the rule the General Knows the Soldiers. Grasp your strength of wisdom of the martial arts and consider your opponents as your own soldiers. Accordingly, you should make them follow your own intentions and move them around freely. When you think in these terms, you become the general and your opponents become your soldiers. You should make efforts in this.

Releasing the Hilt of the Sword

There are various meanings to Releasing the Hilt of the Sword.
There is the understanding of winning without a sword and the understanding of not winning though you have a sword. There are various meanings, but I will not write them all down. You should practice this thoroughly.

The Body of a Rocky Crag

The Body of a Rocky Crag refers to how, grasping the Way of the Martial Arts, you suddenly become like a rocky crag, unmoving and struck by nothing. This is an oral tradition.

The above is what I have written concerning my own style of swordsmanship and is something I have thought over unceasingly. I have written these principles down for the first time, so the order in which they are noted is confused and it is difficult to discuss them in detail. Nevertheless, they should become mental signposts for the person who would study this Way.

From the time I was young I have set my mind on the Way of the Martial Arts, practiced the one subject of swordsmanship with my entire being and experienced various and different understandings. Looking into other styles, I have found that they were either speaking with clever

pretexts or demonstrating detailed hand maneuvers; while they looked good to the eye, none of them had the heart of truth.

Of course, you may think it good to learn such things and to practice them with both body and mind. But they all become injurious to the Way and will be impossible to wipe away even in distant generations. Accordingly, they will corrupt the true Way of the Martial Arts in the world and will be the cause of its abandonment.

The true Way of swordsmanship is to fight with your opponent and win, and this should not be changed in the slightest. If you grasp the strength of wisdom of my martial arts and put it directly into practice, there should be no doubt of victory.

From "The Emptiness Chapter"

It is in "The Emptiness Chapter" that I write down the Way of the Martial Arts of the Two-Sword Style.

The heart of Emptiness is in the absence of anything with form and the inability to have knowledge thereof.[4] This I see as Emptiness. Emptiness, of course, is nothingness. Knowing the existent, you know the non-existent. This, exactly, is Emptiness. To be in the world and see things poorly, to be unable to distinguish one matter from another and to regard this as Emptiness—this is not the true Emptiness. All that is just the mind of confusion.

When you are on the Way of the Martial Arts, you may perform this Way as a warrior, but if you are ignorant of the warrior's practices, you will not abide in Emptiness. You will be confused and will not do the things that you should. Though you term this "Emptiness," it will not be the true Emptiness.

A warrior learns the Way of the Martial Arts with certainty, makes strong efforts in other martial accomplishments, and is not the least bit in the dark about the Way of conducting himself as a warrior. He has no confusion in his mind and is never lazy at any moment of the day. He polishes the two hearts of his mind and will, and sharpens the two eyes of broad observation and focused vision. He is not the least bit clouded, but rather clears away the clouds of confusion. You should know that this is true Emptiness.

While you are yet ignorant of true Emptiness, you may think through your own certain Way, relying on neither Buddhism nor the laws of society, and think this is good. But when you see things from the straight Way of the mind, taking in the world at large, you will see that each person will have the preferences of his own heart, and each eye will have its own distortions. This is turning your back on the True Way.

Know the meaning of this, and make the straightforward your

foundation. Make the heart of truth your Way, practice a broad spectrum of the martial arts, and understand the expansive correctly and clearly. Accordingly, you will make Emptiness the Way, and see the Way as Emptiness.

In Emptiness exists Good but no Evil.
Wisdom is Existence.
Principle is Existence.
The Way is Existence.
The Mind is Emptiness.

The Way of Walking Alone
独行道

Do not turn your back on the various Ways of this world.

Do not scheme for physical pleasure.

Do not intend to rely on anything.

Consider yourself lightly; consider the world deeply.

Do not ever think in acquisitive terms.

Do not regret things about your own personal life.

Do not envy another's good or evil.

Do not lament parting on any road whatsoever.

Do not complain or feel bitterly about yourself or others.

Have no heart for approaching the path of love.

Do not have preferences.

Do not harbor hopes for your own personal home.

Do not have a liking for delicious food for yourself.

Do not carry antiques handed down from generation to generation.

Do not fast so that it affects you physically.

While it's different with military equipment, do not be fond of material

things.

While on the Way, do not begrudge death.

Do not be intent on possessing valuables or a fief in old age.

Respect the gods and Buddhas, but do not depend on them.

Though you give up your life, do not give up your honor.

Never depart from the Way of the Martial Arts.

5

Iba Zesuiken Hideaki

TOWARD THE END of the Edo period, there were a number of popular dojos where samurai could train themselves physically and spiritually, bolstered not only by hard technical training but by intense philosophical study as well. One of the most popular of these was the Shingyoto-ryu Iba dojo, established by Iba Zesuiken Hideaki (1648–1713). Zesuiken had originally come from the mountainous area of Shinshu (Nagano Prefecture), but traveled throughout the provinces studying difference styles of swordsmanship, including the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu, the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto-ryu, and the Itto-ryu among others. While appreciative of the various techniques that he learned from these schools, and that he would eventually incorporate into his own style, he was not satisfied that the true psychological foundations of swordsmanship had yet been plumbed.

Continuing his travels through the mountains of Yamato, he finally met a retired swordsman by the name of Tsumakata Sadaaki Kenjusai. This man impressed Zesuiken, not only with his abilities with the sword but also with his profound and serious character, and a master-disciple relationship was soon established. After a number of years of determined practice, Zesuiken had a great awakening into the profound secrets of the art, and in 1681 he was initiated as Kenjusai's successor. He then returned to Edo and established the Honshinto-ryu (本心刀流), or the True Mind sword style.

One of the philosophic foundations of this style, reflected in the name, is as follows:

> When a man faces an opponent and draws his sword, his mind is divided into two: namely, the intention to strike his opponent and the instinct to flee. Of these two contradictory minds, the true interior mind (本心) is naturally the one harboring fear and the urge to run away, while the mind intent on striking the opponent is exterior and requires a show of courage. In the Honshinto-ryu, the practitioner recognizes his true mind without denial, but his aim is to temper and discipline it to the point where he will never wince,

regardless of the circumstances.[1]

By 1682, Zesuiken had integrated techniques from the styles he had studied as a youth, added a two-sword technique, and founded the Shingyoto-ryu, establishing a dojo that would rank among the four most popular by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The main purport of the Shingyoto-ryu, the Mind/Form sword style, is to recognize the true mind of a human being and to discipline and temper that mind with the forms, or kata, of that style. In this way, the mind is polished much as the rough steel of a sword is brought to perfection by honing, whetting, and sharpening the blade. The fundamental philosophy of the style was summed up in the *Shingyoto-ryu mokurokujo*, written by a sword master of the style, Joginshi:

> The martial art is a mysterious possession of the mind, but if one does not realize this by strong cultivation, it will be difficult to obtain. Fundamentally, there is no victory or defeat. If you do not seek after victory, victory will come naturally. For example, when you stand up, there is a shadow; when you strike something, there is a reverberation. It is like the manifestation of a lightning flash, the spark from a flint, or [the reflection of] a beautiful blushing face before a spotless mirror. If the mind is at ease, it is free; and the savor of this has no limit. It is beyond words and letters. Ordinarily, it can be nurtured by simplicity, directness, and honesty. Study this well. It will express itself in your sword.

There is more than a hint of the strong philosophical bent of this style here, and the above paragraph reflects the lines from the Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* with which the members of the dojo would have been very familiar:

> Sincerity is the Way of Heaven. Sincerity is the Way of Man. Sincerity hits the target without effort, and obtains [its goal] without thought.

The ideal of the Shingyoto-ryu was to develop swordsmen not only of high technical caliber but also of the highest moral integrity, and the Iba clan named as successors men who excelled in the Way of the Sword, whether they were family members or not. Moreover, once authorized by the Shingyoto-ryu, the practitioner was warned that whatever confirmation he received was absolutely not to be used for personal gain or reputation.

An example of this high-mindedness and spirit was demonstrated dramatically in the actions of Iba Hachiro, the eldest son of the eighth

generation *soke*, or headmaster. Praised as a courageous, handsome man of great fighting spirit, Hachiro was called the Little Tengu of the Iba. On New Year's day of 1868, he took part in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi as one of the shogun's picked troops, suffering great wounds but still fighting on as the battle shifted from place to place. His left arm was cut off during a disastrous defeat, and he was shot through the pelvis, rendering him nearly immobile. Somehow extricating himself from the front lines, however, Hachiro waited for his wounds to heal, and finally rejoined the shogun's army at its last redoubt. Though suffering from tuberculosis, he fought with the "strength of gods and demons," brandishing his sword in his right hand. In the end, the modern army of the Imperial forces proved too much, even for a swordsman of his skill and determination, and on April 19, 1869, Hachiro was wounded again, this time during a bombardment from a modern warship, and succumbed on May 12 of the same year.

The man who wrote the *Joseishi kendan* was Hideaki's disciple Joseishi Matsura Seizan (1760–1841), the lord of Hirado Castle in Hizen, Kyushu, and a practitioner at the Shingyoto-ryu Iba dojo during the time he spent in the capital of Edo. Seizan was the thirty-fourth generation lord of the Matsura clan, having become lord of his fief at the age of nineteen. Blessed with a superior memory, he was famous for his study both of science and literature and of the martial arts. His library was said to contain some thirty-three hundred volumes, and he himself left over 270 volumes of essays, contained in the monumental collection *Koshi Yowa*.

Seizan was the consummate warrior-gentleman according to the Oriental ideal, holding the writing brush in one hand and the sword in the other. He received his certificate of mastery of the Shingyoto-ryu at the age of twenty-six, retired from his position as lord of his domain at twenty-seven, and devoted the rest of his life to higher learning and swordsmanship. His works are still read and discussed in Japan and are still very much in print.

Joseishi Kendan

常静子剣談

JOSEISHI MATSURA SEIZAN

Shingyoto-ryu

When you use your wooden sword in the *sekkoto* stance,[2] holding it aloft in the jodan[3] position and attack, it is best not to look at your

opponent's sword and to have your mind void of all thoughts and concepts.[4] When sword strikes against sword, it is like the sound made when the flame ignites a firearm.[5] Have no intentions or designs of your own; simply strike with a settled mind, leaving everything to the strength of Marishiten, or some avatar, or the gods and Buddhas.[6] It is not good to think that you can strike with your own strength.

You should think over what this truly means.

The practitioner who entertains even the least bit of doubt in his teacher will never master the deepest secrets of his art. Nevertheless, the person who believes that his teacher's sword technique will even overcome firearms will also never plumb the depths of that art.

In swordsmanship there are unforeseen techniques, and the use of these may cause the defeat of a man unexpectedly. This, however, is only because the student is in the dark concerning the principles of those techniques. For the most part, a man's arms and legs are limited in their movements, and there is nothing mysterious about them. To these are added two swords, but there is nothing mysterious about the swords themselves. If people conform [with the set limits of] their arms and legs, understand the principles involved, and do their best to employ them completely, it will be found, of course, that there is only a general way of using them. Thus, even a "secret teaching" will be something that can be understood with one's own mind.

Now this may sound doubtful, but after you have thought it over and grasped it on your own, you will believe these words for the first time.

Thus, even the beginning student should make extended great efforts in this, and fully understand its principles. Fully understanding means consistently trying them out in matches of at least a single blow.

When you try to use one technique and it fails, you may try it again, hoping for a better result. This is reasonable, because you want to use that technique as cleanly and properly as possible. This way of thinking, however, is not at the true heart of swordsmanship.

The reason for this is that when reacting to a change in the situation, you want to act with complete freedom. Thus, there are various changes for every technique. The person who does not understand this cannot be said to be a student of swordsmanship.

Though there may be unforeseen changes that you can anticipate and react to ahead of time, there are many times when this is not the case. At such a time, you should react and follow the immediate dictates of

your mind. The person who feels shame, thinking that such an immediate reaction does not conform to the style of his school, apparently does not understand his school's style at all. Fixed forms or techniques exist for reacting to certain changes. In the case of unexpected changes, however, defeating an opponent by a mutated sword technique is highly respected.

This being so, rather than feeling ashamed that the form you tried to use has failed and trying to use it again, use something completely unconventional, and get through the situation in short order. There is no shame in this. Understand that *every* technique is for the purpose of defeating an opponent.

The mind of the true practitioner of swordsmanship must include the resolution to be able to cut down an attacker coming from behind, be he drinking sake, entertaining himself with courtesans, or listening to *koto* or *shamisen* music. He must always make great efforts with this mentality and pass through each day with it firmly in mind.

In the study of swordsmanship, you should be able to look at the way a man carries himself and understand the attainment of his techniques. A man who always bumps his head on things, bangs his rear end into things behind him, touches the paper doors when trying to stand up, stumbles over things placed here and there, or slips on muddy roads will not be a man who pays attention to the details of his sword techniques.

Therefore, in swordsmanship, we should always look carefully at a man's everyday movements in order to gauge his capacities.

People think that the most important moments in swordsmanship come after the swords have crossed, but this is nothing but the leaves and branches of the art. You should know that the most important time comes before the sword has been drawn or the hand has grasped the hilt.

You should understand the meaning of this well.

For example, a firearm is something that can pierce solid armor, and is naturally something to be feared.[7] But its piercing solid armor is really the last part of the process. If you should ask why this is, it is because when the aim is true, the ball pierces the armor, but if the aim is not true, it is all for naught. Thus, one must clearly understand that the most fearsome matter of a firearm comes before the ball is ever fired.

I wonder if you can understand this.

I said, “Among victories, there are strange victories; but among defeats, there are no strange defeats.”

A guest asked, “What do you mean by ‘strange victories’?”

I said, “When you follow the Way and abide by the techniques, though there is no courage in your heart during the bout, you may still win. If you later reflect back on your heart’s condition during that match, you may find this victory strange.”

He asked again, “Then what do you mean by saying that there are no strange defeats?”

I answered, “When you turn your back on the Way and violate the techniques, your defeat will not be in doubt.”

The guest then bowed deeply.

Generally speaking, a secret technique in swordsmanship is not something that will not be made known to others, or, once explained verbally, cannot be hidden away. The reason for this is that if the technique has not really been tried out by the practitioner, but has been carefully hidden away as his own possession, when the time comes for actually facing an opponent, being victorious with that technique will be difficult.

No matter how much a technique is considered a “secret,” if it is to be transmitted, it will be a secret only after it has been tried out against a master or someone who understands that technique. A technique that has not been tried out is not worthy of the term “secret.”

This may seem a bit of a joke, but it is, first and foremost, a metaphor. The mentality of a swordsman must be one that, when facing an opponent—be that opponent a saint or a sage—he should strike him down with a single blow and not go round and round with distracting thoughts.

Think about Confucius’s way of carrying himself; it was exactly that of one who studies swordsmanship. Now, this may sound laughable, as no one has ever heard he was an accomplished swordsman, but if you were to give him as sword and stand opposed to him, he would likely have little trouble in defeating you. And these words should taste as sweet to a swordsman as long years of discipline. Proof of this can be found in the *Analects,* [8] chapters 5 through 7.

> In private life in his own hometown, Confucius was very modest and was almost like someone who could not speak. But at the ancestral shrine and the Imperial court, he spoke smoothly, yet was fully discreet. When he spoke to the lower ministers at court, he

was pleasant; when he spoke to the higher ministers, he was circumspect; and when in the presence of the ruler, he was reserved, yet at ease.

There is more of this in the *Analects*, but it is all of the same import. Read this carefully and you will understand that Confucius was without negligence, either inside or out. Think this over well. In this same way, in terms of your own swordsmanship, even if you stood before Confucius and intended to strike a blow at him, he would allow no opening for you to do so. And in the end, when he found that split-second opportunity, he would able to cut you down.

Yen Hui sighed and said, "Confucius led people in an orderly and natural way, and he did it well." If you look at this carefully, you will see that it is the stamp of swordsmanship.

Once, when I was conversing with the clan elder Matsudaira Izu no Kami at a banquet, he brought up the subject of Noh.

"In the Konparu school style, when an actor holds his fan over his head and gestures at something in front of him, he puts the left side of his body to the fore, positions his right side to the rear, and gestures with his right hand. In this way, the action stands out, and the intent of the actor is clearly understood. When gesturing at anything in the play —for example, the cypress of Yogawa—there are times when the cypress is not in the actor's heart, but he simply gestures as he was taught and intones the words about the cypress of Yogawa as it is in the libretto. Now even if he chants along about this cypress with everything he has, the cypress will not truly be there. Thus, though he gestures, he will be indicating something that is not there, and this is an important point. If, however, he feels that the cypress is in his heart of hearts, fully intends to gesture at that cypress, and points with his fan as though he could see the tree right before his eyes, his appearance will be pregnant with the actual feeling of the tree.

"On the other hand, the common actor will only go along with what he has learned, gestures about the tree with technique, and does not put any feeling into it. Thus, he simply moves his fan without showing any real spirit. You have to understand the difference between thse two."

I responded by saying that this was truly reasonable, and when I withdrew and thought it over, it entered my mind that the practice of swordsmanship contains this same meaning. For example, when the practitioner uses a technique, raises his [bamboo] sword, and strikes at his opponent's shoulder, if he concentrates in his heart on cutting through the man with a single blow, it will be just like seeing the sharp cutting edge of the real thing. However, if he uses his sword to strike his

opponent's shoulder simply in the way he has been taught, even if the gesture of striking is the same, it will look quite different to the observer. You should realize that this is the same for any style of swordsmanship.

Truly, Izu no Kami's judgment was solid.

There is an excellent saying that goes, "Making oneself hoarse in the greenroom."

Generally speaking, when I look at those lined up in their seats listening to lectures on the Chinese classics, I feel it to be a splendid, impressive sight. When the listeners withdraw from their seats, however, I see them sighing with relief, yawning or joking around. How quickly they turn their backs on the purport of these lectures. This comes from considering attendance to the lectures as the exterior and one's regular life as the interior. And this is just like the above saying.

The lecture hall is the place where one studies a subject, and so can be compared to the greenroom. Everyday life is the place where one carries out what he has learned, and so is the stage. The greenroom is where timing and timbre are brought together, and so can be corrected and improved over and over again. But once coming out on the stage, the actor cannot correct a mistake once it has been committed. You should think this over well.

Swordsmanship is just like this: [people think that] the dojo is the interior and everyday life is the exterior. But in the long run, it is foolish to think that the matter is finished if a splendid job is done in the dojo. Understand that in swordsmanship, the dojo is the greenroom and everyday life is the stage. And, as remarked above, mistakes cannot be corrected on the stage. In the dojo, however, practice can be repeated time and again.

The student of swordsmanship is apt to mistake the greenroom for the stage.

I often talk about the following:

To treat the dojo as a place of fighting with real swords goes beyond its proper purpose. It is the everyday atmosphere of the place that is of the utmost importance. Certainly, during training, the techniques should be conducted as though with a real sword. This is nothing but the foundation of real matches. However, training in recent times aims only at advancing and retreating, and the actions of the arms and legs. It never extends to the activity of the mind.

The other day I read in the "Ch'u Li" chapter of the *Li Chi*[9] that "when attending a funeral, you must look grieved; when carrying the coffin,

you must not smile; when music is played, you must not sing along; and when wearing armor and helmet, you must have an expression that should cause no offense." This is the same as saying that the Confucian gentleman should be cautious not to lose the proper attitude or expression with others.

So the ancients had already taken notice of this fact, and what is included in the *Li Chi* concerning the noble man can also be said to be the foundation of swordsmanship. An understanding of the above four provisions is not just for extraordinary circumstances. Rather, the Confucian gentleman is advised never to lose sight of them.

The student of swordsmanship should keep this in mind as well, and when facing an opponent at the dojo will be well-advised to strengthen his mind and to make great efforts toward keeping a [dignified] inoffensive expression.

People talk about having bouts with swordsmen of other styles in other parts of the country, and they praise the man who has countered another's technique and defeated such and such a person. And in all likelihood, the man who is praised thinks that his own techniques are quite good and that he indeed had defeated those opponents.

I myself am of another mind.

To speak in terms of this very heart of our style, a one-time victory is not a victory for life. This is a secret of our style, but I will mention it anyway: "With a victory that is accomplished once, the technique is meaningless; but a victory that lasts a lifetime is done with the technique of his everyday mind." If the student of swordsmanship understands the significance of this saying, he will understand all of our style's teachings.

6

Issai Chozanshi

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marked the appearance of the literati, or *bunjin* (文人), in Japan. These men and women—mostly painters, poets, musicians, and martial artists—paid special attention to the patterns of the natural world around them and applied these to their own lives and arts. According to the literati, the Tao, which is behind all natural principles, manifests itself by patterns (文). Thus, the waves and ripples of all bodies of water, the blooming and falling of flowers, the sound of the wind, or the flight of birds are each a manifestation of the eternal principle for our contemplation. Man, too, has his patterns, which, filtered through his mind and body, are best expressed in the arts. Meditation on nature, then, our own and that in the world around us, leads us to an understanding of these patterns, and in this way, there is an immediate connection between the pattern of the Tao and the purest patterns of man: Tao > Nature > Man > the Arts.

What gives physical and vital energy to these patterns is the universal breath of ch'i, commonly understood to be a force—neither totally material nor spiritual, but perhaps something in between—that constitutes and pervades everything in existence. In early Chinese thought, this ch'i is the most fundamental natural phenomenon that transform and flows; it is the essential substance or thing-in-itself that manifests everything between heaven and earth: light and dark, man and mountain. Ch'i is the foundation, the wellspring of life.

If the universe itself is ch'i, continuously manifesting itself according to the circumstances, it follows that the individual entity of people or things is nothing more than an illusion, and that birth and death are only events or wayfarers in the constant transformation of this ubiquitous material force. In what must have been an interesting declaration for artists of all types, but particularly for martial artists, an early Taoist claimed that if you could fully grasp this ongoing process of illusion, you would no longer be obstructed by things; "nothing would be able to attack you; your body will be dark, and you will be able to caress crocodiles and whales."[1]

The implication of these ideas on ch'i in connection with the martial

arts are clear: we must be able to integrate with the flow and transformation of ch'i; we must be able to ride its changes and understand its manifestations before they ever appear; and when faced with obstacles, we must be adaptable rather than create courses of action. Ch'i must be free-flowing and neither stiffen nor resist. Thus, the real master "acts, but relies on nothing."[2] He does not control things, but neither do things impede his way. It is in the patterns of ch'i that we understand the deepest principles of the world.

A further implication for the martial artist is that nothing is fixed. Nor, indeed, will anything of either solid or more dynamic pattern retain its identity for long. The perceptive martial artist will be constantly aware of this flux, noticing the rise of yang or the fall of yin modalities of ch'i in his or her own dynamic field of energy, and will carefully gauge the balance in time of conflict. Activation of the yin or yang at the appropriate time will be the essence of the art. For the true master, this will not be executed intentionally but with absolute spontaneity.

The stories and parables contained within *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts* offer no advice on techniques, strategies, and maneuvers. Rather, they seek to set the martial artist on an inward path, a path of non-dependence, spontaneity and ease. Setting out on this Way—essentially opening up the mind to a very different disposition—the martial artist will no longer be distracted over the comparative efficacy of technique, or the superiority of one school over another. With a new mentality or psychological approach he will transcend such concerns, and this, coupled with the proper channeling of ch'i, will be radically transformative. In other words, if the student can internalize the essence of all the martial arts, he or she can pursue mastery of any chosen style with confidence and commitment. The goal is not so much technical proficiency, but transformation.

Issai Chozanshi was the pen name of Niwa Jurozaemon Tadaaki (1659–1741), a samurai of the Sekiyado fief [3] and the author of *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts*. Little is known of this man, but he was likely one of the literati, more interested in a quiet life of studying the arts, rambling through nature, and laughing and drinking with like-minded friends than in being involved with power and influence or the great topics of the day. Surely the name he chose as his literary moniker provides an insight into his personality. The 佚 of Issai can mean "to avoid" (as in society), to "take pleasure in" (as in studies), or to "play around" and to "be content." Tellingly, the compound 佚遊 means to amuse yourself with your own pursuits. Thus, Issai is the artist who amuses himself and others. Chozanshi, on the other hand, may be taken

as the "philosopher of Stinking Tree Mountains." The *cho* (樗)—*Ailanthus glandulosa*—is a tree known for its twisted and unpleasant-smelling timber. In the *Chuang Tzu*, when a man complains that the *cho* in his yard is useless, ignored by carpenters and avoided by everyone, Chuang Tzu points out that this precise uselessness is why it has lived so long. He then asks his complaining neighbor, "Why don't you plant it in the village of Nothing-at-All or in the field of Empty-of-Breadth? Knocking about, you could engage in non-action at its side; free and easy, you could sprawl out and sleep beneath it. It will not be cut down prematurely by axes great or small, and will be harmed by nothing. Even though it can't be used, how will it ever be troubled or distressed?"

Regardless of this playful attitude, Chozanshi was clearly well acquainted with swordsmanship, philosophy, and art; had made an extensive study of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto; and seems to have been familiar with the works of Musashi and Takuan. His writings, mostly completed during the second decade of the eighteenth century, are a masterful syncretic treatment of these philosophies and religions, illuminating the central meaning of each, either in direct instructions on the martial arts or in humorous and fanciful stories that instruct in a more circuitous way. His writing style has a corollary in paintings, popular during his time, of the Buddha, Lao Tzu, and Confucius talking together or tasting wine or vinegar from the same jar: the essence is the same, only the individual perceptions differ. What is important is to understand that essence.

The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts

天狗芸術論

The Centipede Questions the Snake

The centipede questioned the snake, saying, "I move along using a hundred legs, but I still can't go fast. When I'm being chased by human beings, there are times I wish I had wings. When I look at you, I see you have no legs at all, but you move along quite easily. Surely this should be insufficient and you should be handicapped. What technique do you have to move along so easily like this without even a single leg?"

The snake said, "Why should I have a technique? If I simply point my head in the direction in which my mind wants to go, my body follows along. Looking at you, I can see that you go along by moving your many legs. Surely when there are many affairs, the mind is pressed. By what technique do *you* carry your many legs along like this without mixing them all up?"

The centipede said, "It is not that I use my many legs by putting my

mind into each one individually. When my Heaven-given faculty moves, then my hundred legs move accordingly and carry my body along as well. Moreover, my mind isn't pressed at all, so what kind of special technique *should* I use?"

An earthworm close by sighed and said, "Well, now, men are clear enough about what they've understood, but can't infer one thing from another. The men who lecture on the Four Books and the Six Classics,[4] with their magnificent and noble principles, would none of them understand commentary on their own minds. Thus, once separated from their books, they are unable to understand the mind at all. They only listen and memorize, and then interpret the words. How much less could they know *this* mind, *this* body, and the creation and metamorphosis they enter and exit? The centipede's many legs, the snake's lack of legs altogether—both are the Creator's doing and are incomprehensible to the snake and the centipede themselves. Thus, the centipede's many legs give him no adversity; and the snake, with no legs at all, does not find himself handicapped. Now if they were to do something artificial like take the wings from a flying insect and attach them to their own bodies, they would not only be unable to fly but the wings would become obstructions, and they would be unable to walk as well.

"The long legs of the crane and the short legs of the wild duck are both their own natures. If you thought the crane's legs too long and cut them back a good bit, the crane would be in great pain and would die. If you considered the legs of the duck to be short and extended them out a good bit, the duck would be in great pain and would probably not even be able to stand up for some time. This means that even if you improve the legs aesthetically, you would not be leaving a thing to its nature and it would be unable to function.

"For the most part, men may know that there is a function to something, but will not know how to ground themselves in that function's nature. They know that something works on its own from its very creation, but don't know how to leave it to do so. Thus, they use all sorts of their own wisdom and clever wit, but daily go against the god-given principles of their own creation.

"Look, there are those that reside in trees, those that swim in water, those that lie down in fields, and those that live in holes. Dogs and monkeys alike have four legs, but a monkey climbs up a tree quite easily while a dog can't do that at all. A horse can carry a heavy load and go a long distance, but it can't catch mice like a cat. Each has its own unique genius, which is quite unlike the other's. This is the nature we receive from Heaven. The centipede and the snake have different natures, and their appearances are different, too. The centipede has been provisioned with legs. The snake may not understand the technique for going along

freely with no feet, but that's not a problem. Even if the legless snake hears of the centipede's technique for using its hundred legs, there's no way he can put it to use.

"I, too, have no arms or legs, and have no eyes or nose. And even though it's my own body, I have no idea which is my head and which is my tail. I've never really considered this right up to the present, but it's always been enough. If you think this is indeed the way things should be, you will not be compelled to seek things that you would like to know. From time to time I sing a song,[5] but I've never learned exactly what the tune is. Above, I eat lumps of earth; below, I drink from the Yellow Springs;[6] but I seek for nothing in the world. If I'm naturally discovered by a chicken, that's as far as my fate goes. If there's life, there's death. Why should I be afraid? If you look at it from the point of view of the day they died, P'eng Tsu's[7] eight hundred years and an infant's dying within seven days of its birth are the same. It is foolish to think that all things are not limited by life and death, or that we must have good fortune but not bad.

"Yin and yang, the ch'i that either gives life or kills—all of these are the current of Heaven's Way. I, too, am but one thing within heaven and earth. I'm born in the midst of creation, and within creation I prosper, wither, and disappear. Sunshine or shadow, good or bad fortune—these are the commands of the Creator. How could I dare to avoid what the Creator has done? I just entrust my body to the Creator and don't intrude my own willfulness while I'm here. This is knowing the general drift of the Way."

The Toad's Way of the Gods

There was a man by the name of Bokusai. Hearing that there was a shrine in some province, he set off for a visit. There he saw a man dressed in a dingy outfit prostrated before the front shrine, praying for all he was worth, yammering on in a squeaky sort of voice. Then an ugly old man wearing a rumpled-up light tan cotton robe came out from somewhere behind the shrine and spoke. "Whoever you are, with that cunning expression on your face and the unnatural look in your eye, when I take a good look at you I can see that you're someone with a great desire. You've been praying for something for a long time."

The man in the dirty outfit responded by saying, "How ashamed I am; and how quickly you've seen through to my faults. I am actually a rat advanced in years. Because of my agile nature, it's easier for me to cross over beams and rafters than it is for men to walk along on land. Moreover, I have strong teeth. Because of that, there's no place I set my eyes on that I can't eat my way through, and no place I can't go. Since

there's nothing I don't like to eat, there's nothing I *don't* eat. But even though I have this physical freedom, there's this scoundrel called a 'cat' they keep in every house, and it's causing me unthinkable harm. My prayer is that, through the might of the gods and Buddhas, the cats of this world be kicked to death all at once.

"Listen, the cat has no value in this world at all. First of all, it is cruel, it steals fish that have been placed on dishes, it kills and eats the caged birds that people treasure, it leaves its feces scattered around the sunken hearth, and in the end turns into a *nekomata* and harms people.[8] So it causes many disasters and has no benefits. My prayer is not a petition of greed; it's a request for the avoidance of physical harm. An old man, no matter who he is, will make temple visits and increasingly pray for all sorts of things."

The other old man replied, "I am in fact the toad that lives under the veranda, and have no desires concerning the world. I do no harm to people's homes, and so am of no concern to them; if I'm not good-looking, then I'm not lovingly kept in a cage, either. As I'm not fond of delicacies, I never think of stealing food. I live in the privy or underneath the veranda, catch and eat the little bugs that fall into my hands, and live my life like this without incident. What sort of wishes should I have that I should pray to the gods?

"A cat causes you injury, so you have good reason to hate it. But take a good look at yourself! A cat is a useless thing in this world, just as you've said. But because it possesses the art of catching *you*, people forgive it for stealing a little food, and in fact put food out for it. It's not that they love cats, it's that they abhor you with a passion. You know that there's nothing valuable about a cat being in the world, but don't know that you're a detriment to society at large. The minds of men of small caliber are all just like this.

"You are naturally nimble and have strong teeth, so you could climb up tall trees and eat their hard nuts; as there's nothing you don't like to eat, you could eat the numerous bugs and crickets in the hills and fields or eat the leftovers people throw on the trash heap. If you did this, would people hate you and keep cats that need so much care? If you had teeth that were just like everyone else's, you would be unable to go into places people protect, you would cause little harm, and people would probably not hate you as much as they do now. It's exactly because of those teeth in which you have so much pride that people are unable to keep you out. It is also why they keep cats, look for the places you live, and catch you. That the clever wit of men of little caliber actually becomes a disaster can be understood from the example of your teeth. Rather than pray to the gods for something impossible because you hate cats, if you reform your mind at this moment and cause no more

damage to people's homes, no one will keep useless cats in this world, and your body will be replete.

"But this does not apply just to you. Men do not behave themselves prudently: they blame others and then pray to the gods and beseech the buddhas for things they themselves are not equal to. This is what men of little caliber always do. Listen, the gods do not accept improprieties. Men think that no matter what they pray to the gods for, it will be granted, whether good, evil, correct, or perverse. Men's minds are asinine.

"Look, there is a way to employ the deities. You must first remove all selfish desires and distracting ideas from your mind, and so purify yourself within. This is called inner purity. The day that you go to the shrine, bathe and wash your hair, change your clothes, do not eat disgusting things, and so purify your body. This is called outer purity. Cleansed both inwardly and outwardly, when you worship the deity with all the sincerity of your heart, you should drink in a sensation of absolute sincerity as though it had immediately alighted on your head. You should not have disrespect in your heart even for a moment. If you act in this way, you will be influenced by the virtue of the deity's absolute sincerity, and your selfish greed and distracting thoughts will be extinguished; the heart of sincerity will arise within you, and a mind of gratitude will somehow be born in the midst of a refreshing desire to repay that virtue. This mind is exactly the advent of the deity. It is the sensing of the ten thousand virtues and the fulfillment of the ten thousand blessings.

"The Way of the Gods is to respect purity. Thus, the person who employs and celebrates the deity only prays that his own mind becomes more and more pure with the help of the influence of the deity's power. The gods have an unfathomable, wonderful effect, and are the natural form of heaven's principles. If your mind is pure, the deity will come on the principle of 'similarly pitched voices go well together; people of the same disposition seek each other out.' Contaminated by wanton desires and distracting thoughts, you will receive the deity's loathing. For this reason, if your mind is perverse and conversant with many selfish desires, the deity will not come though you pray for a hundred days and a hundred nights. This is like blocking the road and then expecting someone's arrival.

"More than this, you should inquire into the deepest principles of the Way of the Gods. When you look at people who currently try to employ the gods, you can see that they make no efforts to avoid defiling their minds. Instead, they depend on people like Buddhist priests, *yamabushi*, and Shinto priests, giving them gold, silver, and other valuables to pray to the gods in order to receive happiness, prospering descendants, and

long lives with no illnesses. The more extreme of these people promise to make donations or build shrines if their desires are fulfilled, so from the very beginning propose their requests by fixing a price.

"How is the deity going to receive such a man's despicable mind, congratulate his desire, and fulfill his request? This is measuring the deity by one's own base avarice; it is defiling the gods to the extreme. Being struck with immediate punishment is the deity's choosing to 'soften bright light.'[9] If you played the fool like this with someone like your master, he would get very angry and punish you immediately.

"Long ago, a merchant made a request to the governor of his province: 'If you declare that I am the sole supplier of salt in your domain, I'll give you a commission of five hundred silver coins.' The governor of the province was enraged at this request and said, 'That lowlife merchant! If I didn't allow the people in my domain to buy salt from someone else and he alone sold it at a high price, I might receive a commission of five hundred silver coins, but he would make a profit of five thousand. What kind of thing would it be to make difficulties for the people of my domain and then share a profit with that merchant! Don't let men like that in here again.' It is said that with this statement, the intermediary elders and counselors all withdrew in shame.

"This is a well-known fact: even in the secular world it is difficult to use an honest master for the sake of one's own avarice. Needless to say, the gods possess an unfathomable divine virtue. They will only be impressed at your absolute sincerity. Why should they aid the perversity created by your own selfish mind?"

The Demon's Sermon

The Gist

Man is a moving being.[10] If he does not move to what is good, he will surely move to what is not. If this consciousness does not arise here, another consciousness will arise there. Man's mind goes through multifarious changes and never stops. If one is not deeply resolved and does not intently study the mind,[11] he will never become enlightened to the essence of his own mind. Nor will he be able to directly follow his own nature, that decreed by Heaven.

Therefore, the sages taught the beginning student only the Six Arts[12] and first made him into a vessel. From this point, he would discipline himself and aim to search out a transmission of the Great Way. From the time of a man's youth when he studied the Six Arts, the mind was considered fundamental,[13] and a base liking for words was put at a distance. The mind was not indulged with playthings or vacuous entertainments, and the body was not endangered with recklessness and

depravity. On the outside, the bones and sinews were strengthened and disease was kept in check; on the inside, the provisions of the state were established, and its prosperity was not taken lightly. When a man reached this point and made clear the study of the mind, he became an aid to the Great Way.[14]

Though one art may seem trivial, one should not take it lightly. But again, do not make the mistake of considering that art to be the Way.

The Sermon

One of the demons asked, "What is it to move without moving, and to be at rest without being at rest?"

The demon said, "Man is a moving thing. He is incapable of not moving. There are many different responses to man's daily needs, but for one who has grasped the Way, his mind is not moved by phenomena. The essence of the mind is selfless and without desire, and thus at peace and undisturbed.

"Speaking in terms of swordsmanship, when a man is surrounded by a large force and is moving this way and that, if he has resolved the matter of life and death, settled his spirit, and does not have his thoughts rattled by that large force, he will be moving without moving.

"Haven't you seen a man riding on a horse? The man who rides well runs the horse to the east and west, but his mind is tranquil and his unhurried body is unmoving and at peace. Seen from the side, the horse and the man seem to be firmly fastened together. And if he simply restrains the horse's errors, he will be doing nothing contrary to the horse's nature. Thus, though the man is mounted on the saddle and is master of the horse, the horse is not troubled by this and moves with its own understanding. The horse forgets the man, the man forgets the horse, and their spirits are one and do not go in different ways. You could say that there is no man in the saddle, and no horse under it.

"This is a manifested form of moving without moving that is easy to see.

"An unskillful rider will go against the horse's nature, and will himself be ill at ease. When the horse and rider are always separate and at odds, the whole frame of the rider's body will move, his mind will be preoccupied with the horse's gait, and the horse too will be tired and troubled.

"In a certain riding manual there is a poem [supposedly] written by a horse:

He whips me,
As if to go,
Then pulls on the reins;

My mouth drawn down,
I can't even move.

"This is something that informs us of the horse's emotions instead of our own. And this is not just for horses. You should have this mentality for working with people as well. When you run contrary to the heart of everything and apply learned details first, you yourself will be preoccupied and others will be vexed.

"And what is it to be at rest though not at rest? Before joy and anger, grief and pleasure issue forth; the essence of the mind is transparent and contains absolutely nothing. In the midst of this ultimate peace and absence of desire, when external phenomena arrive, the mind responds but is not attached to its functions. It is the essence of the mind that is at peace and does not move. What moves and responds to things is the function of the mind. The essence is at peace and contains the myriad of principles and the clarity of spiritual strength. Function follows the laws of the universe and responds to innumerable situations. Essence and function are of one origin. This is what is called moving but not moving, and being at rest but not being at rest.

"To speak of this in terms of swordsmanship, let us say that you take up a weapon and face your opponent. Your opponent comes at you while you are completely at peace, without malice and without fear. Moving this way and that without any thought or concept, you are able to respond freely without any obstructions. Though your body moves, you do not lose the peaceful essence of your mind; though you are at rest, you do not lack the function of movement. A mirror itself is at rest and contains nothing. It allows ten thousand shapes to come and be reflected, and manifests their forms. Yet when they move on, no shadow or shape remains.[15] The metaphor of the moon in the water is the same. And the clear spiritual strength of the essence of the mind is also like this.

"When men of little character move, they are drawn by that movement and lose themselves. When they are at rest, they become empty-headed and are unable to respond functionally."

The demon went on, "As I explained before, activity or rest throughout the body is entirely a function of ch'i. Thus, the mind is the soul of ch'i,[16] and ch'i is simply yin and yang, pure or muddy. When ch'i is pure, there is activity and lightness of function; when it is muddy, there is stagnation and heaviness of function. Form follows ch'i, and for this reason in swordsmanship it is considered essential to train your ch'i. When ch'i is active, practical application is light and swift; when it is muddy, practical application is heavy and slow.

“Although a vigorous ch’i is respected, when your vigor is used with partiality and harmony is neglected, it becomes fragmented and its function cannot be put into practice. A person who relies on such will leave nothing behind but empty actions without use. And though, when it comes to function we respect harmony, when vigor is not the master within it, it flows away and results in weakness. Now the weak and the soft are different altogether. The soft contains living ch’i and performs function. The weak is simply not strong and is unable to perform function. Being at rest and being inert are also completely different. Being at rest does not distance itself from living ch’i, but being inert is slightly removed from it.

“A person who is tense relies on ch’i but has difficulty in loosening it. Relying on thoughts or concepts, you will become taut. The ch’i of yin becomes taut on its own, and the person who relies altogether on ch’i will not be swift in responding to some action. Thus, a tense or taut ch’i will be slow in its function of technique. But the person whose ch’i goes first will dry up his technique’s practical application. This is yang, and lacks foundation. It will be light and parched, and will be like withered leaves scattered by the wind.

“The person who is too damp and stagnant will be dragged down by a muddy ch’i that is heavy of itself and will be slow in practical application. The person who is too concentrated will focus on ch’i with partiality, and will render his form shackled and rigid. He will come to a standstill and will be unable to move. Thus his action and response will be all the slower, like a stream that has frozen and is unable to melt. This, again, is the congealing of thought and the congealing of ch’i. What we call thought is also ch’i. The known is called thought; the unknown is called ch’i. You should test this out and know it on your own.”[17]

The demon continued, “The man who has complete freedom in changing between the hard and the soft will have no obstructions in his actions and responses. And this is not just in swordsmanship alone. Even in Learning, if a man studies and grasps this complete freedom in changing between the hard and the soft in ch’i, he will be able to manifest the mysterious function of the mind.

“The mysterious function of the essence of the mind leaves no traces and cannot be explained. Thus, in swordsmanship you develop yourself by means of ch’i and know how to manifest the essence of the mind. In Learning you develop yourself by means of the mind and know the mysterious function of the metamorphosis of ch’i. Nevertheless, when you only know this in terms of principle within your consciousness and do not cultivate it and grasp it with your body, the mind knows ch’i only

by hearsay and will be unable to perform its function. A swordsman may cultivate his ch'i, but if he only develops it in terms of the practical application of swordsmanship, the spirit of Learning in his mind will be only one-directional, and that cultivation will not extend to his daily activities.

"The mind is fundamentally one with ch'i. If you test this out for yourself and grasp the gist of it, you should be able to perform appropriately with improvement even though your training is not yet mature."

The demon spoke further, "For all the schools of swordsmanship, when it comes to the deepest principle, there is only one. It is simply that each of the various styles leads out from the door thought to be good by the founder who trained and cultivated himself, putting his entire being into it. But there are many who love the landscape along the way, and who live in that landscape, thinking it to be the Truth. Because of this, you see the many branching styles fighting among themselves over what is right and wrong. But the fundamental principle is not something that can be fought about in terms of what is right and wrong. The landscape along the way is nothing more than what is in your own consciousness; there are not two or three Great Fundamentals.

"When you make divisions, there is good and evil, perversion and propriety, hard and soft, and long and short. But you will never cease to argue on the ramifications of branches and shoots. It is foolish to think that another person doesn't know what you know. If you have spiritual clarity, another person will have spiritual clarity as well. How could you be the only knowledgeable one while everyone else under heaven is a fool?

"Thus, there is nothing that is hidden. And it is just like this in Learning. For the disciples of Lao Tzu, the Buddha, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu, Ch'ao Fu, and Hsu Yu,[18] they were one in seeing the essence of mind in selflessness and absence of desire. Thus, they had not a hair's breadth of selfish thought in their heads to encumber them. It was simply that the landscape they saw was different, and so in their separation, their schools were different.

"The Way of the sages crowns itself with heaven and places its feet upon the earth, and so does not leave the mountains and rivers or the solid ground behind. It takes interest in knowing the foolishness or incompetence of the common husband and wife, and will enact them out as well.

"There is no one under heaven not gifted with humanity and righteousness, and no one to vilify for their lack of filial piety, obedience to elders, loyalty, or good faith. Even the disciples of the Buddha from

India receive the blessings of the sages and are bathed in their humanity and righteousness.

"This is not in a place that can be reached by the landscapes of the different schools. And that is because you see it by looking down from the Great Foundation of Heaven and Earth and the Ten Thousand Things. The disciples of the different schools are all just different factions of the sages. They are unable to turn their backs on the Great Way."

One of the group asked, "Purity and muddiness are yin and yang. Why should we only employ purity and avoid muddiness?"

The demon replied, "There are points when you will use muddiness as well, although in swordsmanship celerity is favored. You cannot do without yin and yang. It is simply that you use clarity and avoid the weight of muddiness. In drying things you use fire, you do not use water. It is just that each has its own use. The mind's clarity or dullness is again nothing more than the clarity or muddiness of ch'i. Clarity of ch'i shelters the spiritual awakening of self-nature. Matter is of itself intelligent. The essence of the mind is fundamentally mysterious and omniscient. It is simply that when muddy ch'i covers the mind's spiritual clarity, foolishness, stupidity, and dull-wittedness are born. Something that is confused or contrary to reason we call foolishness. The stagnant and slow we call dull-witted. Muddy ch'i is extraordinarily heavy; we are pulled back by its sediment, our thoughts become entrenched, and we are confused and lost in darkness. We are unable to set aside our thinking. We are unable to become settled ourselves, nor are we able to follow others. Always perplexed, we are unable to stop. This is called stupidity. While we say that the character of the common man has infinite variety, it is all just a matter of the muddiness of his ch'i: how shallow or deep, how thick or thin.

"The mind is the soul of ch'i. This is not to say that where this ch'i exists there is no soul. If there is no ch'i, there is no soul. Again, this is like a person riding in a boat, crossing over the water. When the wind is violent and the waves rough, the boat follows the wind and is pulled by the waves; no one knows where it's going to go, and the people inside the boat are uneasy. The phenomenon of muddy ch'i moving in confusion and the mind not being at peace is just like this. When the wind stops and the waves die down, they return to their original state, and the people in the boat are able to feel at ease.

"Man creates perversity in his mind and puts his body in danger. This is nothing but the confused action of muddy ch'i. Its foundation is the typhoon that blows out of the cave of desire. Desire itself is an inclination of muddy ch'i. When an eccentric person has strong emotions

and passions, the yin ch'i will congeal and strengthen. Someone whose mind is agitated and without self-confidence will lack the foundation of yang ch'i. An apprehensive person will starve his ch'i and his body will not be replete. A person unable to fix his mind will have weak ch'i and will be unsettled. He will also be close to stupidity. These are all maladies of muddy ch'i.

"Now, a person who is deliberate and quick of mind will integrate yin and yang, and will lack nothing. A man whose intelligence is discerning, but whose activities are not deliberate, will have a dominant, clear yang ch'i, but the vitality of his yin will be weak. The man whose activity is deliberate but who lacks discerning intelligence will have a dominant yin vitality, but his clear yang ch'i will be weak.

"For that contained by the yang within the yin, or the yin within the yang—one could never come to an end of discussing excess or deficiency, the shallow and the deep, the thick and the thin, or all the other innumerable variables. When you conjecture about the varieties or imagine the details, none are excluded from yin and yang, clarity and muddiness. From the vastness of heaven and earth at the top to tiny beings like lice and fleas below, if they are not replete with the ch'i of yin and yang, they will be unable to perform the functions of their forms.

"At this time I've discussed only the gist of this matter."

Another in the group asked, "How do I cultivate this ch'i?"

The demon answered, "It is only in avoiding its muddiness. The ch'i of yin and yang is active and, going through changes and metamorphoses, is the Great Foundation of Heaven and Earth and the Ten Thousand Things. Muddiness is the sediment and dregs of yin and yang. Dregs and sediment have come to a halt and are not active. Moving with the aid of yang, their function is heavy and slow. This is like when you add mud to clear water and immediately have muddy water. When you have muddy water, you can't cleanse things. If you sprinkle things with it, you just make them dirty. Thus, the art of Learning does nothing more than use the clarity of intuition to clear away muddiness. When you have cleared away muddiness, your ch'i will be lively, the essence of mind will manifest itself alone, and the confused mind will turn immediately into the Original Mind.

"The mind, after all, is not two."

The demon continued, "Although yin and yang are fundamentally of one ch'i, as soon as you divide them, innumerable differences arise. When you obscure the differences of their functions without knowing that they

are originally one, the Way will be unclear. When you know that they are originally one but are not aware of their different functions, you will be unable to put the Way into action. Simply test this out in your mind, and make efforts in its details. Explaining it in words would never come to an end. It is only because you demons up here in the leafy trees have not fully understood the essence of the mind that I have expounded now in terms of existence and nonexistence.

"This mind exists in the center of ch'i, just as a fish swims in water. A fish has freedom according to the depth of the water. If a large fish is not in a deep pool, it will not be able to swim. And if the water starts to dry up, the fish will be in trouble. When the water is all gone, the fish will die. The mind has freedom according to the vigor of the ch'i. When there is a lack of ch'i, the mind thins out; when ch'i is exhausted, the mind returns to non-existence. Thus, when water churns up, the fish are startled; and when ch'i is in motion, the mind will not be calm."

The demon continued, "This is not limited to matters of physical confrontation. In all things it is different to entrust matters to Heaven or to entrust them to fate. In swordsmanship, you always thoroughly investigate the principles of physical confrontation; in human affairs, you stay within the principles of justice natural to those affairs, and employ none of your own personal cleverness. You act, but are not dependent on anything; you think, but are not bound to those thoughts. This is called entrusting things to Heaven. It is like a farmer working in agriculture: he tills the soil, plants the seeds, weeds skillfully, and leaves no stone unturned in the Way at which he should be so proficient. But he entrusts those things beyond his control—such as floods, droughts, and typhoons—to Heaven.

"When you leave things to Heaven, but have not done everything you could in human affairs, you will not have understood Heaven's Way. You will just be waiting for things to happen of their own accord, and this is called entrusting things to fate. For the moment, however, it could be said that if you are confused and unsettled, you should go ahead and leave things to fate."

One of the other demons asked, "The essence of the mind has no form, color, sound, or scent. The 'mysterious function' is spirit and its principles cannot be known. How then can we train our minds?"

The demon said, "The essence of the mind cannot be put into words. Simply control the excess or insufficiency of the movement of the seven emotions [pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, and desire] or in the awareness of your own consciousness during the moments of action and

response. Avoid the confused action of your own selfish thoughts, and follow the natural principles of your own self-nature. Putting your hand to this will depend on the revelation of your own intuition. What is this 'intuition?' It is a knowledge that illuminates truth and falseness, perversity and propriety, with the spiritual clarity of the essence of the mind, and is conversant with the very essence of heaven and earth.

"For the common man, this knowledge is clouded over by the confused action of muddy ch'i and is unable to illuminate these things completely. But that which even barely perceives these things as through the slightest fissure is called intuition. With a single thought, you know what is true and what is not; you perceive a man's sincerity and know when you yourself have done something wrong and are unhappy in your heart of hearts.

"The moving emotions create a mind that is apprehensive about the welfare of others, sympathetic, and full of pity. It is inevitable that we love our parents, are affectionate to our children, and associate properly with the members of our family. This is 'intuition.' When you believe in this intuition and follow it, when you foster it and do no harm because of your own selfish thoughts, the confused actions of muddy ch'i will quiet down on their own. The spiritual clarity of natural principle will manifest itself and itself alone.

"Selfish thoughts are born from a mind bent on its own profit. And when you think only about your own profit, you will not think twice about how you harm others. In the end, you will create perversity, generate evil, and even destroy your own body.

"Cultivating your mind and cultivating ch'i are not two different things. Thus, Mencius lectured on nurturing a vigorous ch'i. And this is simply in having the will to do so; it is not necessarily in making great efforts to foster that ch'i."

The Mysterious Technique of the Cat

There was a swordsman by the name of Shoken.[19] One day, a large rat turned up in his house. The rat would not leave, and it took to roaming around the house, even in broad daylight. Eventually, Shoken managed to trap the rat in a room, so he could set his cat upon it. But as the cat entered the room, the rat advanced, hurled itself at the cat's face, and sank its teeth into it. The cat let out a scream and ran away. Realizing he was up against more than he had bargained for, Shoken went around the neighborhood and borrowed a number of cats that had made names for themselves as the best of their kind. He chased them into the room where the rat was making its nest in the corner of the alcove, but when one of the cats approached, the rat once again pounced and sank its

teeth into it. When the other cats saw this appalling situation, they all fled in fear.

Shoken was outraged and chased the rat about, trying to kill it with a wooden sword he carried at his side, but the rat would slip away and avoid being struck. Furthermore, although all the paper-covered sliding doors were smashed down and torn in the fracas, the rat would jump and escape into the center of the room, always moving with the speed of lightning. It seemed that sooner or later the rat was going to leap at Shoken's face and give him a taste of its teeth. Shoken broke into a sweat and said to himself, "I've heard that not far from here, there is a cat that is first-rate and in fact unequaled. I'd better go borrow that one," and thereupon sent a man off for it.

The cat was brought in and Shoken took a look at it, but it did not appear to be particularly clever or even very active. Still, he thought, "First I'll try putting it into the room anyway," and so he opened the door just a little and put the cat inside. The rat cowered right where it was and was unable to move. The cat walked over in a leisurely fashion and dragged the rat away as though it were nothing at all.

That night, all the other cats gathered at the house and, inviting the old cat to take the most honored seat, all genuflected before him and, with great respect, said, "We are all called first-rate cats. We have disciplined ourselves in our Way, and sharpen our claws to crush even weasels and otters, not to mention rats. Up to now, however, we have never encountered such a strong rat as this one. Yet you overcame him easily, perhaps by some personal technique. We humbly request that you impart your lordship's mysterious technique to us, holding nothing back."

The old cat laughed and said, "All you young cats work with considerable skill, but you haven't heard about the method of the Correct Way. Thus you have met a situation contrary to your expectations and have come to grief. Nevertheless, I would first like to hear about how each of you have trained."

An agile black cat stepped up from the midst of the group and said, "I was born into a house of mousers and have exerted myself in that Way, leaping over seven-foot screens and squeezing myself through tiny holes, so that from the time I was a kitten there was no quick or nimble trick I could not do. Whether it was the strategy of pretending to be asleep or suddenly exploding in a blaze of energy, I never faltered, even with rats that ran along the rafters and beams. But today I have encountered a rat stronger than I could imagine and have gotten the beating of a lifetime. This is something I never expected."

The old cat said, "Ahh, your discipline is only a performance of skill. Thus, you still haven't escaped from the mind that aims at something.

The men of old taught performance in order to inform others of the Way, so such performances were simple and contained a profound principle within them. In these later times, performances of skill are considered specializations: various details are concocted, dexterity is inordinately refined, the ancients' sayings are considered insufficient, and the practitioner uses his own wit and contrivances. In the end, it all comes down to a contest of performance skills; dexterity consumes itself, and for what? Those who practice refining the dexterity of men of little character and those who specialize in wit and contrivances are all like this. Wit may be used by the mind, but it is not based in the Way. When one specializes solely in dexterity, he is at the edge of make-believe;[20] and, contrary to what you might think, there are many instances of wit and contrivances becoming nothing but drawbacks. You should reflect on such matters in this way, and make great efforts."

Next, a large brindled cat came forward and said, "To my way of thinking, we respect the ch'i of martial arts. Therefore, I have disciplined my ch'i over a long period of time. Now that ch'i is serene and exceedingly strong, and would seem to fill heaven and earth. I trample my opponent underfoot, by first defeating him and then advancing. Following the voice, responding to the echo, I control the rat and there is nothing I cannot answer to. I have no thoughts or intentions for using a performance of skill, and my performance flows out on its own. I can just stare at a rat running along the rafters and beams so that it falls off and is taken. Nevertheless, this strong rat has no form when it comes, and leaves no traces when it goes. What kind of thing is this?"

The old cat said, "Your training can only function by depending on the power of ch'i. You are still depending on yourself. This is not the highest good.[21] If you are going out to defeat your opponent, he may also be coming out to defeat you. And what about when defeat turns into no defeat at all? You may disguise your intentions to crush your opponent, but your opponent may do the same. And what about when a disguise turns into no disguise at all? How can it be that only you will be strong and all your opponents weak? Thinking that your ch'i is serene, exceedingly strong, and filling heaven and earth is all just considering its form. It resembles Mencius's 'vast and expansive' ch'i,[22] but in fact it is not. Mencius's ch'i depends on complete clarity and so is strong and sturdy. Yours is strong and sturdy because it depends on power. Thus, their functions are not the same. They are as different as the eternal flow of the Yellow River and the force of an overnight flood. Moreover, when someone will not yield to the energy of your ch'i—what then? There are occasions when a cornered rat will bite a cat, contrary to expectations. Pressed with certain death, there is nothing for it to fall back on. It forgets about life, forgets about its desires, does not consider

victory or loss as inevitable, and has no thoughts of preserving its own skin. Thus, its resolve is like iron. How could you defeat an opponent like this with the force of ch'i?"

Then a middle-aged gray cat advanced composedly, and said, "The ch'i of which you speak is fully active but has a form. Things that have a form may be indistinct but can be seen. I have disciplined my mind for a long time. I do not develop force, nor do I contend with things. I am in harmony with others and run counter to nothing. When someone attempts to be tough with me, I meet him with harmony and so become his companion. My technique is like catching pebbles with a large curtain. Though you may speak of a cornered rat, there is nothing to fall back on to contend with me. Nevertheless, today's rat could neither be overcome with force nor met with harmony; both coming and going, he was like a god. I've never seen anything like him up until now."

The old cat said, "Your harmony is not natural harmony. You think, and so create harmony. Though you intend to avoid your opponent's sharp spirit, you still retain a small bit of intention, so your opponent sees through your tactic. If you attempt to reach harmony by inserting your mind, your ch'i will be corrupted and you will be approaching negligence. When you think and then do something, you obstruct your natural perception. And if you obstruct natural perception, how can the mysterious function be given life from anywhere at all? Simply without thinking, without doing anything, move by following your natural perception and your movement will have no form.[23] And when you have no form, there is nothing in heaven and earth that could be your opponent.

"That said, each and all of your disciplines are not without value. The meaning of the phrase 'form and spirit are consistent,'[24] is that the highest principle is contained within a performance of technique. Ch'i is what generates function throughout the body. When that ch'i is serene and everywhere, response to things will be boundless; and when you are in harmony, there will be no contending with strength. Though you are struck with metal and rock, you will not be crushed. Nevertheless, even the smallest thoughts will all become [conscious] intentions.[25] This is not the spontaneity of the Way.[26] Thus, when you face off with another, if your mind has not been subdued, the mentality of opposition will exist. What technique will you use then? No-Mind[27] and responding naturally is the only answer.

"Still, the Way is not limited, and you should not think that what I say is the ultimate. Long ago there was a cat in my neighborhood; it slept all day and had no vitality at all. It was like a cat made out of wood.[28] People never saw it catch rats, but wherever the cat was, there were no rats in the vicinity. And this was true even if it changed locations. I went

over and asked why this was so, but it gave me no answer. Though I asked it four times, still four times it did not answer.[29] It was not that it could not answer, but that it didn't know what to say. This is, as you know, an example of 'those who know don't speak; those who speak don't know.'[30] That cat had even forgotten that it had forgotten itself, and had returned to a state of Nothingness.[31] The very spirit of the martial, it killed nothing.[32] I am far and away unable even to approach that cat."

Shoken listened to this as though in a dream. He went over to the old cat, folded his hands over his chest, bowed his head with deep respect, and said, "I have disciplined myself in the art of swordsmanship for a long time but still have not reached the summit of that Way. Tonight, listening to each of these theories, I have attained the highest degree of my path. May I request that you point out its very deepest mysteries?"

The cat said, "No, I'm just an animal. Rats are my meals. What would I have to do with the actions of human beings? Still, there is something I heard in secret. That is that the art of swordsmanship is not exclusively in making efforts to defeat others. It is the art of dealing with the Great Transformation, and being clear on the matter of life and death. A man who would be a samurai should always maintain this kind of mentality and should discipline himself in that art. For this reason, you should first of all penetrate the matter of life and death; make no particular adaptations to the mind; have no doubts and no vacillation; do not use your own wit, contrivances, or prejudices; harmonize mind and ch'i; rely on nothing; and be as serene as a deep pool. If you are always like this, you will be completely free to respond to any change.

"But when the smallest thing enters your mind, form will appear. And when there is form, there will be an opponent and there will be yourself. Facing each other, there will be conflict; and in a situation like this, the mysterious functions of change and metamorphosis will not occur with freedom. First, your mind will fall into thoughts of death and you will lose all clarity of spirit. How then will you stand readily and with resolve for a fight? Even if you should win, it would be what is called a blind victory, and this is not the true object of the art of swordsmanship.

"'Nothingness' is not what you would call empty-headedness. It is the foundation of the mind and has no form. You should never be taken by phenomena.[33] Once you are the least bit taken by something, your ch'i will be drawn to it. And once your ch'i is even slightly drawn to something, it will be incapable of adaptability or openness. It will go beyond what you are facing, but not reach the place you are not facing. When it goes too far, your energy will overflow and be uncontrollable; when it can't go far enough, it will be clogged up and useless. In neither case will it be able to respond to change. What I am calling Not One

Thing means neither being taken by nor drawn toward phenomena, that there is neither opponent nor myself,[34] and that there is nothing more than following phenomena as they come, responding to them, and leaving no traces.

"The *I Ching* says, 'No thoughts, no actions; being serene in non-movement; perceiving and thus becoming intimate with the particulars of heaven and earth.'[35] If a man who studies the art of swordsmanship understands this principle, he will be close to the Way."

Shoken asked, "What does 'there is neither my opponent nor myself' mean?"

The cat replied, "Because I exist, my opponent exists. If I do not exist, neither will my opponent. 'Opponent' is the name we give primarily to someone who stands against us. Yin and yang, water and fire, are of this sort. For the most part, something that has form will surely have something in opposition to it. However, if there is no form to my mind, there will be nothing opposing it. When there is nothing in opposition, there is no contention. This is what is meant by 'there is neither an opponent nor myself.' When phenomena and myself have both been forgotten, and I am deeply serene and tranquil, then I am in harmony and at one with the world. Though I crush the form of my opponent, I myself will not know it. This is not 'not knowing,' but rather there will be no thought here whatsoever, and I will only move in accordance with my perceptions. When the mind is deeply serene and tranquil, the world is my world. There is no right and wrong, liking and disliking, or being taken by phenomena. Everything within the boundaries of pain and pleasure or gain and loss are created by my mind. And though we say that heaven and earth are vast, there is nothing to seek outside of our own minds.

"An ancient worthy said:

When there is dust in the eye,
the Three Worlds are shut out;
When the mind and heart are without a care,
one's whole life is at ease.[36]

"When even a little bit of dust or sand gets into your eye, your eye is unable to open. And it's just like this when you put something into a bright and clear place where originally there was nothing. This is a metaphor for the mind.

"Another saying has it, 'Surrounded by tens of thousands of the enemy, your form may be pummeled into small pieces, but this mind is still yours. Even the greatest opponent can do nothing about that.' Confucius said, 'Even an ordinary man cannot be robbed of his will.'[37] But when you are confused, that very mind will become an assistant to

your opponent.

"I'll stop talking here. You should now simply engage in self-reflection, and seek within yourself. A teacher can only transmit a technique or enlighten you to principle, but receiving the truth of the matter is something within yourself. This is called grasping it on one's own. It is also called transmission from mind to mind,[38] and again, 'a special transmission beyond the scriptures.' This is not turning one's back on the scriptures. It is saying that a teacher cannot transmit this to you. This is not only in the study of Zen. From the Law of the Mind of the Confucian sages down to the arts,[39] 'grasping it on one's own' is always a matter of 'transmission from mind to mind.' It is a 'special transmission beyond the scriptures.' The scriptures are within yourself; [those that are written down] only point out what you have not been able to see on your own.[40] This is not something conferred on you by a teacher. It is easy to teach and also easy to listen to the teachings. It is only difficult to see that they are something within you, and to make them your own. This is called seeing into one's own nature.[41] Enlightenment is the perception that you have been having a wild dream. An awakening is the same. There is no difference between them."

7

Yamaoka Tesshu

YAMAOKA TESSHU was born in Edo in 1836 and began studying swordsmanship at the age of nine. His father, who was a direct retainer to the shogun, recognized his son's seemingly preternatural talent in the art and hired talented sword masters to accompany them when the family moved from Edo to the mountain town of Hida Takayama, but he also insisted that the boy study the Chinese classics and Zen. It was the martial arts and Zen, however that would become Tesshu's lifelong obsessions.

By the time Tesshu was eighteen, both of his parents had passed away, and, after settling the family's affairs and distributing their inheritance among his siblings, he returned to Edo and entered the Genbukan on his former teacher's recommendation. There he studied the traditional eighteen martial arts, while visiting other dojos where different styles were being taught and having matches with students there as well. It was during this time that people began to call him Onitetsu, the "Iron Demon." Tesshu's fierce yet friendly personality that accompanied his frame of over six feet and two hundred and forty pounds may explain why this nickname seemed to be so fitting.

In 1853, Tesshu enrolled in the Yamaoka Ninshin-ryu of sojutsu, the art of fighting with the spear. The master of the school, Yamaoka Seizan, was one of the finest spearmen of the time, insistent on intense training, and a staunch Confucian. After Seizan passed away, Tesshu married his daughter Fusako and was adopted into the Yamaoka clan. Three years later, Tesshu joined the shogunate as a minor official, but by 1867 he was counted as one of the personal guards of Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu.

By this time, Japan was divided into two camps: those favoring the restoration of the emperor as head of the government and those who remained loyal to the tottering Tokugawa shogunate. The outcome had been developing for decades, and on January 3, 1868, the Satsuma samurai overran the Tokugawa palace in Kyoto in the name of the emperor and declared the end of the shogunate. After the disastrous battle at Toba-Fushimi, where the shogun's forces were again routed,

demands for surrender were sent to the shogunate in Edo, one of the items of which was the exile of Tokugawa Yoshinobu. This latter was unacceptable, and it appeared as though a final bloody battle was inevitable.

It was Yamaoka Tesshu who broke this impasse by striding unchallenged into the enemy camp and demanding a meeting with the commanding officer, Saigo Takamori. Takamori was shocked by the audaciousness of this brave and selfless act, but he still refused to compromise with the shogunate. Tesshu pressed his point that what was at stake was the future of Japan, however, and after long talks (and very likely a good bit of sake), Takamori relented and rescinded the demand for the shogun's exile. Thus, a cease-fire was arranged and the shogun was able to abdicate with no further major hostilities. The following year, Tesshu joined the new Meiji government, and by 1872 was appointed to the Imperial household, becoming a close confidant and drinking partner to the emperor.

Throughout his political career, Tesshu continued to train vigorously in both swordsmanship and Zen meditation. His life's standard was that "the Sword and Zen are One (剣禅一如)," and the story of his final enlightenment in this matter is included in a selection of his writings presented here. It was after this enlightenment on March 30, 1880, that he established the Muto-ryu (無刀流), or No-Sword style, so named from his notion that absolutely nothing should be an obstruction to the practitioner.

Two years later, Tesshu opened the Shunpu dojo at his own residence in the Yotsuya district of Tokyo, where both swordsmanship and Zen were taught through the handling of bamboo swords.

At his dojo, Tesshu emphasized commitment and single-mindedness far more than kata, or forms. Of the fifty basic kata that the Muto-ryu taught, only the first five were practiced for the first three years. And, much as the Itto-ryu katas today, they were all based on combat conditions.

In 1885, Tesshu was presented with the soke license by his teacher, the nineteenth-generation Itto-ryu master Ono Tenzen Nario, and entrusted with Ito Ittosai Kagehisa's favorite blade, the Jar-Smashing Sword. Tesshu then changed the name of his style to the Itto Shoden Muto-ryu—the Correct Transmission of the Itto School No-Sword style. In just another three years he passed away in the middle of summer at the age of fifty-three, sitting up in the formal zazen position.

Tesshu was a sword master, calligrapher, painter, and politician who lived his life with great intensity. When he practiced kendo it was with his entire being, and it is said that he drove his students to exhaustion,

and then some. When he drank, he did not simply take a cup or two or three, and at times he drank the emperor himself under the table. In matters of sex, the women who worked in the pleasure quarters never asked him to pay, and this happy situation would have gone on indefinitely had his wife not threatened to kill herself and their children if he didn't stop fooling around. In politics, he was completely fearless and open. His calligraphic works—of which there are hundreds—indicate no hesitation or doubt. In this way, Yamaoka Tesshu was a unique manifestation of the swordsman's ideal of delivering every strike—no matter where or when—with one's fullest intent, energy, and being.

The Art of the Sword and the Principles of Zen

I have studied the martial arts since I was young but have always kept my mind deep within the principles of Zen Buddhism. What I experienced, I put into form, and by this means have arrived at where I am today.

Around the age of nine, I began to study the art of the sword under Kusumi Kantekisai, and then continued receiving lessons from Inoue Seiko, Chiba Shusaku, Saito Yakuro, and Momonoi Shunzo. I also had more matches than I can count with strong swordsmen from other schools. In this way, I passed nearly twenty years in hard work and intense thought but was unable to reach any peace of mind. And it was at this point, I guess, that I made an eager enterprise of searching in every direction for men who were enlightened in the Way of the Sword. Nevertheless, such men I was unable to encounter.

Then, I unexpectedly met Asari Matashichiro Yoshiaki (1822–1894), a master of the Itto-ryu. He was the second son of Nakanishi Shisei, swordsmanship instructor to the Matsudaira clan, and successor of the style of Ito Ittosai Kagehisa. He was an extraordinarily proficient man.

When I first heard of Asari Sensei, I was overjoyed and went off to beg for a match with him. Sure enough, every aspect of his style was greatly different from the swordsmanship current in the world at that time. On the outside he was soft; on the inside, hard. His spirit was concentrated in his breath, and I knew of no way to even strike him. You could truly call him a master.

After this, each time I had a match with him, I understood how great my own insufficiencies were. Thereafter, though I trained myself diligently, there was no way I could ever defeat the man.

From this time on, I had matches with others during the day, and I sat alone meditating on Asari Sensei's concentration of breath and spirit at night. When I closed my eyes, concentrated wholeheartedly on my

breath, and envisioned a confrontation with the master, he would suddenly appear before my sword, and it was just as though I were facing a mountain. I considered him to be a man that, truly, I would never be able to strike.

Though I went on training in this way, I was unable to penetrate the deep significance [of swordsmanship], and the reason for this was none other than my innate stupidity and lack of sincerity.

Then one day, I visited Tekisui,[1] and heard the principles of Zen.

At our first encounter, I argued in full account that swordsmanship and the principles of Zen were one. Then Tekisui said,

> You have spoken well. However, if I may speak a word unreservedly from the viewpoint of my own foolish Way, right now you are looking at things separated by spectacles. The spectacles, to be sure, are clear and transparent, and though you can say that they do not obstruct one's vision all that much, for a person whose physical eyes are perfect, there is no need to use them, no matter how clear the lenses may be. And, if one does use them, there will be some irregularity. If he does not, everything will be just as it is.
>
> At the present, you have advanced to the point of wearing these spectacles, but if you could get beyond this one obstacle, you should be able to reach the very depths of the place you wish to go immediately. It goes without saying that you are a man who can arrive at the mastery of Zen and the sword simultaneously. But once you have suddenly become enlightened of the Way, there will be no reason for you to arrive at the state of "killing or giving life with freedom," or "communing with the gods and doing as you like."
>
> Thus he encouraged me with great sincerity. And he added,
>
> "Just immerse yourself in *mu*."[2]

I grappled with this koan morning and night for close to ten years but was never able to understand it. So once again, I went off to see Tekisui, and informed him of my present situation. He once again raised a koan and said,

> When two swords cross blades,
> It is no use running away.
> Returning with a good move
> Is the same as a lotus within a flame.
> It is just like ch'i
> Flying high of itself.

And he urged me to think it over.

I felt an extraordinary interest in this verse and, copying it down

inside my sash so that I might always meditate on it, I did so for about three years.

One day, it happened that a certain wealthy merchant[3] came by and requested some of my brushwork. He spoke at length about his own personal history, and his story was remarkable.

He said,

> The world is a strange place. I feel hesitant to talk about myself, but I do think this rather a mystery. I was born into an extremely poor family, but now, quite contrary to expectation, have amassed great wealth. This is truly surprising.
>
> Among the experiences of my youth, I think about one in particular. I had put together four or five hundred yen, and laid up a stock of merchandise when, out of the blue, a rumor went around that prices were going to fall precipitously. Then, when I got nervous and thought that I should sell everything off, my acquaintances took advantage of my weakened state and came running to buy up all my goods cheaply. In the end, I had my heart in my mouth, found my feelings wavering, and was unable to understand the true value of my goods at all. I became confused about everything and was completely demoralized.
>
> At that point, I gave up and, regardless of the circumstances, let the matter take its own course.
>
> But as the days passed, a number of merchants approached me and said that they would buy all my goods at ten percent higher than the original cost. This time, however, I remained firm and replied that I would not sell at a low ten percent profit, thinking that I might be able to get another five percent increase.
>
> Now, it would have been all right for me to have sold out at the price they offered, but greed blinded me and, while I was thinking, "I'll sell higher, and maybe even higher yet," in the end, the goods finally sold for less than twenty percent of the original value.
>
> At that moment, I understood the true temper of business for the first time. I now think that if you're going to step in and engage in some large enterprise, and become nervous about winning and losing, or gains and losses, the [simple] laws of commerce will not suffice. After all, if you're dead set on making a profit, you'll become quite nervous; and if you're afraid of taking a loss, you'll be unmanned altogether.[4]

Since then, I have changed my thinking and have understood that if I worry over things like this, I will be unable to complete

> great enterprises at all. Now, no matter what my intentions, I first clear my mind, settle my thoughts, and get a grip on myself. Then, when I set about my work, I do not get caught up with this and that, but do the job rapidly and constantly. After that, regardless of any gain or loss, I feel that I have done the job of a proper businessman. Thus I have arrived at the place you see me today.

This story shed light on the verse "When two swords cross blades" that Tekisui had given me before, and the verse in turn provided understanding to the merchant's story. When I thought about it in connection with my own swordsmanship, I was aware of a mysterious meaning that cannot be expressed in words.

That was the thirteenth year of Meiji (1880), March 25.

From the following day, I applied this to my swordsmanship, and at night, again sank into meditation and deep thought. On the fifth day—actually the evening of March 29—I was concentrating my breath as before and, with sudden illumination, was awake to the mental state in which nothing exists between heaven and earth. The night had already passed, and it was now the dawning of the thirtieth day of the month. Still seated, I brought before me the vision of taking up the sword and facing Asari Sensei for a match. But unlike before, I could not perceive any image of the master standing before my sword.

Rejoicing in the depth of my being, I knew that I had reached the perfection of *muteki*—being unchallengeable.[5]

I immediately sought out one of the master's pupils, Koteda Yasusada,[6] and invited him to a bout, I myself grasping a wooden sword.

Our wooden swords were drawn and crossed, but I had still had not had time to test my skill when Yasusada yelled out, "Please, Sensei! Permit me to withdraw!"

When I withdrew my sword and asked the reason for this, Yasusada replied, "I've received lessons from you for some time now but have never seen anything like the strange force of your sword today. There is no way that I can possibly stand before you. How can something like this be achieved with mere human strength?"

His expression was one of extreme wonder.

At this point, I asked for Asari Yoshiaki and begged him for a match. The master was happy to do so; he brandished his wooden sword and welcomed me as his opponent. With a shout, he assumed the energy of instantaneous action.

Suddenly, however, the master threw down his sword, removed his helmet, assumed a correct posture, and said, "You, my student, have now arrived! There is no comparing you to the man you were formerly.

I am no match for you. How can I not entrust you to our secret traditions?"

In this way, the deepest secrets of Itto-sai's so-called *musoken*[7] were finally passed down to me. This was March 30, the thirteenth year of Meiji. Nevertheless, I was not able to rest at ease. Rather, I thought all the more deeper and in detail into things, and reflected on my own immaturity. Thus, I have now established the Muto-ryu[8] and have realized my long-cherished aim.

As you may assume from what I have written above, my style of swordsmanship does not place importance solely on technique. Instead, I desire the practitioner to aim toward enlightenment in the perfection of the principles of the mind. In other words, I entreat the student to delve deeply into the source of the Way of Heaven and, at the same time, to distinguish the laws of its application. Moreover, I urge each one to look into his or her own nature and to be enlightened in the Way.[9] I can say nothing more than that.

Ahh, the study of all Ways is nothing more than this. An ancient worthy said,

> If you put forth effort into technique, it will become clearer. If you continue to put forth effort, you will arrive at that technique's perfection. You who study the Way, I beseech you: do not be lazy.

I studied swordsmanship and troubled my mind for decades. Reacting to every new circumstance, I stayed true and became all the more adamantine. But one morning the ramparts and walls all crumbled and fell. Now I've come back to a full awakening, like an image fully exposed.

All discussions of the mind only fill the mind with confusion. Concentrating and being tied up with victory and defeat, all efforts are lost.

If you would know the secret of swordsmanship, its heart is a flash of lightning cutting the spring breeze.[10]

In Swordsmanship, Discerning the Correct from the Twisted[11]

There is no special method in the true secret principle of the correct tradition of swordsmanship. It is simply in following along with what the opponent is partial to, and then gaining the victory.

"What the opponent is partial to . . ."—what does this mean? When two blades meet, both practitioner and opponent naturally think of striking each other. But in this way, the practitioner leaves everything

up to his opponent and defeats him by going along with what his opponent is partial to. This is a true victory.

This is, for example, like taking something out of a box, when you first take off the lid, look inside, and know in detail what the contents are. This is winning naturally, and the reason why there is no special method involved.

Nevertheless, the easy quality of this technique is extremely easy, while its difficulty is extremely difficult. Those who study it should not think of it in facile terms.

For the moment, look at those who study the swordsmanship of other styles. Their approach is quite different. In facing an opponent, they advance directly with an unyielding spirit and want to drive in for the victory with a reckless and hot-blooded strength.

This is a twisted method.

One might think that such a pursuit might result in some strength temporarily during the vigor of youth. But when one has passed middle age or has become ill, his body can no longer act freely and he loses power. And though he performs a technique, he cannot keep up with those who have never studied swordsmanship at all. In the end, it is ill-spent strength.

You can say that this results from not looking into the matter of twisted methods. Those who study swordsmanship should master this principle, discipline themselves, and train hard.

I will say in addition that this law is not simply the deepest secret of swordsmanship. Rather, you should not let go of this standard in your conduct for any single one of all the ten thousand human affairs. Getting the knack of this, you will be able to face the battlefront, participate in the government, succeed in foreign affairs, conduct yourself well in education and religion, and engage in agriculture and business. Advance in this way, and nothing will go amiss.

This is why I say that the true principle of swordsmanship penetrates the deepest principles of all creation.

Explanation of the Name, No-Sword Style

Swordsmen discipline themselves and work hard to reach the state of No-Opponent, which they consider the ultimate attainment.[12]

When one thinks in terms of the superior or inferior qualities [of the man before him], however, he will not have the state of No-Opponent, and this is entirely a question of the mind. When he faces a superior man, his mind will stop [at that thought], he will hold back his sword and be unable to advance. In his mind, he is creating this opponent, of itself his mind goes no farther than this idea, and, as stated, he holds

back his sword and is unable to go forward. When he faces an inferior opponent, however, his mind expands and his sword moves with freedom. This is because, in his mind, he thinks he is free.

This is proof that there is nothing outside of the mind.[13] Thus, it is seen as a great mistake if a practitioner spends many years of hard practice but only works his body and plies his sword.

What I have discovered and developed, I have named the No-Sword style, because outside of the mind, there is no sword. This is No-Sword. No-Sword is similar to what is called No-Mind,[14] and what is called No-Mind is the mind that does not stop.

When the mind stops, there is an opponent; when the mind does not stop, there is no opponent. Mencius[15] said, "Ch'i is broad and expansive, and fills everything between heaven and earth," and No-Opponent is the ultimate [attainment of this expression].

When you concentrate your efforts night and day, and practice diligently, you will one day discover yourself to be in the land of No-Opponent. Have no doubts, work hard, and train yourself well.

Written Version of the Naming of This Style of Swordsmanship, the No-Sword Style

No-Sword is said to be the state when the sword is not outside of the mind, and this is because "in the Three Worlds, there is only One Mind."[16] This One Mind means that "fundamentally, not one thing exists,"[17] inside or out. Thus, when you face an opponent, there is no opponent in front and no self behind. This is mysterious response in No Direction, and leaves no traces at all. And this is the reason I have named this the No-Sword style.

There is nothing that is not Mind, from the three realms of past, present, and future, to every last thing in the universe. That Mind leaves absolutely no traces and is an inexhaustible storehouse of energy. Its function bubbles up in the east and sinks into the west; it erupts in the south and goes down in the north. Its mysterious transformations are free and spontaneous and cannot be measured throughout heaven. . . . The more its mysterious response appears, the more curious it becomes. It is like the saying that "the color blue is extracted from the indigo plant but is bluer than the plant itself." Its daily use is like this in both universals and particulars.

The Mind is free and unhindered and does not stay behind in things. When you want to sit, you sit; when you want to go, you go. This is the true source in speaking, in being silent, in movement, and in rest.

Is it not delightful, this cutting quality of the Mind's sword?

The Gist of Sword Technique of the No-Sword Style

- The sword technique of the No-Sword style does not contest for victory or defeat but, rather, clarifies one's mind and forges one's courage. It seeks a natural and spontaneous victory.
- This style is in the pursuit of both particulars and the universal. The particulars are techniques; the universal is the Mind. We reach the place where particulars and the universal are one. This is considered to be the realm of the mysterious.
- What is No-Sword? Outside of the Mind, there is no sword. When you face an opponent, you do not depend on the sword; but with the Mind, you strike the mind. This is called No-Word. When you train yourself in this and put forth effort, it will be like drinking water: you yourself know if it is cold or hot. You discover this for yourself without the help of another.

Catalog of Provisions in the Martial Arts of the No-Sword Style

- The Two Positionings of the Eye 二之目付之事 (*ni no metsuke no koto*)
- The Downward Cut 切落之事 (*kiriotoshi no koto*)
- Distance 遠近之事 (*enkin no koto*)
- Length and Breadth, High and Low 横竪上下之事 (*yokotate, joge no koto*)
- Indication of Movement 色付之事 (*irotsuki no koto*)
- Eyeing the Mind 目心之事 (*mokushin no koto*)
- The Suspicious Mind of the Fox 狐疑心之事 (*kitsune gishin no koto*)
- Pine Breeze 松風之事 (*matsukaze no koto*)
- Topography 地形之事 (*chikei no koto*)
- Nothing Outside Passing through the Mind 無他心通之事 (*mutashintsu no koto*)
- Spacing 間之事 (*ma no koto*)
- Remaining Alert 残心之事 (*zanshin no koto*)

To begin, the sword technique of this style is called the One-Sword style, not because of its founder's name.[18] Rather, it has a meaning of its own.

All the Ten Thousand Things of the universe begin with the Great Ultimate.[19] This is the same principle of one sword generating and directing the ten thousand transformations, which then return as a single sword. There is also significance in the One-Sword style's saying, "Let flow the Life-Giving Sword." "Letting flow" here means "disposing of," which is to say that in this style we aim at letting go: What arises

with one sword is disposed of with one sword.

This principle of disposing, however, is difficult to understand, so here we may use the example of "the tile in front of the gate." You take the tile, rap on the gate, and someone comes out and opens the gate. At this point, the tile has fulfilled its function and can be thrown away. But if you take it in with you and sit down with it still in your hands, it will have no use at all.

Sword techniques are just like this. When you should strike, you strike with one sword. Then, as the function of this one sword is finished, it can be disposed of, and, after that, this one sword arises once again. Although there are ten thousand transformations, this principle is the same in all of them. You strike, and return to the mind that does not strike. This is the ultimate in disposing of strength.

Again, "letting flow" is like the rushing of water, as the principle of its moving power is never to stagnate in the least. The energy of flowing water is expansive. It flows down the mountain and crosses the valley. In this way, in this "flow," one can see the peculiarity of our founder. In this way, we study the energy of the peculiarities of Ittosai's sword techniques—which is to say that we imitate them. And this means that we imitate Ittosai's peculiarities and memorize them. Thus, nowadays, disciples study the teacher's peculiarities. This is "flowing out."

Strategy is the Way of the Warrior. The warrior's art is generally called strategy, but to consider sword technique as a strategy is a broadening of this concept. By learning one principle with each art, one transitions to ten thousand principles.

These twelve articles are presented in the catalog one by one, and its content is transmitted in this way. Taking them one by one, and thus eventually presenting them all, has a profound significance. One sword arises and is transformed into ten thousand, but then the ten thousand return to the one. There are twelve months to the year. The yang advances in the first month, and the ten thousand things are created. Yin is bestowed within the yang, and the ten thousand things begin to grow. Finally, yin reaches its height, and the months and the year come to an end. Seeing things in this way, we understand that yang develops within the yin, and returns again as the new yang of spring. The cycle of yin and yang is like a gem with no edge.

Practicing our style is just like this. It begins with one and ends with twelve. But it then returns to the one and is never depleted. Thus, we return to the beginner's mind[20] and return again, performing these twelve techniques, each with a content without limit.

- *Ni no metsuke no koto*

The two *metsuke* are the two ways of positioning one's eyes at

the opponent. First, while looking at the opponent's body in general, there are two places to fix one's eyes: the *kissaki*, or the point of his sword, and his fists.[21] The reason for this is that if his fists do not move, he will be unable to strike, and if the *kissaki* does not move, he will be unable to strike as well. This is one principle of setting the eyes. The other principle involves not forgetting oneself while looking at the opponent, This provides for the necessity of "knowing oneself and knowing the opponent."[22]

- *Kiriotoshi no koto*

Kiriotoshi[23] is not a matter of first striking down the opponent's sword and then defeating him. It has the same feature as "flint and spark" and "a space that not even a hair could enter." The principle that produces a spark when flint is struck is of the same nature as yang emanating from the midst of yin. Where does this spark come from? The same space into which you could not fit a single hair. The *kiriotoshi* strikes the opponent with the same cadence as the flint and spark. Look at the leaves that fall in late autumn when yin is reaching its height. Yang resides within yin, and just as the leaves fall, a new bud is beginning to develop. This is the principle, then, of striking the opponent just as you execute the *kiriotoshi*.

- *Enkin no koto*

The practice of *enkin* is a matter of widening the distance from the opponent when he strikes at you and narrowing the distance when you strike at him. The reason for this is that if one's body is poised with raised sword, the distance he must move to strike is increased; but if the visor of his helmet is turned down (i.e., the body is slightly bent), and he advances to strike, the distance must be decreased. Looking down at the opponent and looking up at him are two very different approaches. One must not look at a far-off facemask while being unaware of the nearby fist that can be defeated. This, in the end, is knowing that something nearby can be vanquished but still striking at something far away. This is *enkin*.

- *Yokotate, joge no koto*

Yokotate joge is the place of true center. If there is an action against you from above, respond from below; if there is an action from below, respond from above; if the action comes horizontally,

respond vertically; and if the action comes at you vertically, respond horizontally. This is a matter of the mind residing in the center and of allocating your ch'i forcefully from that center. We can express this as an illustration: (a) Imagine a cube. (b) Draw a circle inside of the cube and place your mind in the very center. (c) Be mindful that this is not just for swordsmanship but expresses the ultimate meaning of everything between heaven and earth.

In this way, if the mind is in the center and does not waver, you will not miss the standard of *yokotate joge.*

- *Irotsuki no koto*

Irotsuki means not getting stuck on your opponent's appearance. It means not being confused by a stance you are not familiar with, or distracted by a shout or *kiai*. Regardless of what form your opponent's stance may take, if you will maintain the *yokotate joge* standard you have acquired, you will be in no danger.

- *Mokushin no koto*

Mokushin means looking with your mind rather than with your eyes. This is something you have to think over. What you see with your eyes will cause confusion; what you see with your mind will not be confusing either inside or out. The eyes are disposable observers, but you truly see with the eyes of the mind.

- *Kitsune gishin no koto*

Kitsune gishin is a warning against entertaining doubt. The fox is a very suspicious animal. When the hunter chases after it, it will stop here and there and look back, and by turning round and round, it is finally shot dead. This is because it is full of suspicions and doubts. Were it to scamper off quickly, it would be able to get safely away. Sword technique is just like this. When you stand before your opponent and doubt whether you should do this or that, you will be struck by that opponent before you have made up your mind.

- *Matsukaze no koto*

Matsukaze is a caution to avoid harmony[24] [with your opponent]. When the wind blows through the pines, there is a constant rustling harmony between wind and pine. But if you do not avoid this kind of harmony, there will be no clean victory. When there is an exchange of blows like the weak on the weak,

stone on stone, or cotton on cotton, you will see no contest at all. Accordingly, our style strikes with the rhythm of No-Rhythm. You opponent's weak points you attack with strength; to his strong points you respond with weakness. If your opponent approaches you with a *seigan* stance,[25] take up a *gedan*[26] and attack him from beneath his grip. If your opponent takes up a *gedan* stance, you should take up the *seigan* stance and meet him with raised sword. This is winning by avoiding harmony. If you are the wind, blow down the pine; ride the wind and you will be victorious. If you are the pine, avoid the wind's ferocity[27] and win by slipping out of the tiger's jaws.

- *Chikei no koto*

Chikei is a matter of ordered turf or inverse turf. Facing downhill is called ordered turf, while facing uphill is termed inverse turf. The ordered is also called victorious turf, and here there are many benefits to striking your opponent from a lowered grip. The inverse is also called "sweat" turf and results in looking up at your opponent. As one is actually looking upward in this situation, it is also called the turf of defeat. This concept also includes the disadvantages of facing the wind, rain, sun, or moon. However, although you may initially find yourself standing in an inverse turf according to the place, you may position your opponent into that same inverse turf by either advancing, retreating, stepping up, or drawing back.

- *Muta shintsu*

Muta shintsu means striking your opponent with a totally concentrated mind. Even during your ordinary training, your mind may be moved by the many spectators and such, or your concentration distracted by various thoughts. In this way, you will not be able to move with total self-possession (自己いっぱい). *Muta shintsu* is striking your opponent using the sound technique you yourself have obtained, without other things passing through your mind.

- *Ma no koto*

Ma is the distance or space between you and your opponent. If you consider that your own sword is three feet long,[28] and your opponent's sword is the same, the ma will be six feet. Thus, if you do take at least one step forward, you will be unable to strike your

opponent. For this reason, our style teaches—for either striking or thrusting—"one step, one sword." You should grasp the importance of this distance on your own during ordinary practice. Also, the phrase, "A fine light slips into the space," means entering into your opponent's gap.

- *Zanshin*

Zanshin is striking, but not leaving the mind behind. It is striking deliberately even when thinking that the strike may not be true. If one does not leave the mind behind, the action is finished, and being finished the mind can return to its original state. This is the principle of *zanshin*. This would seem to be overly cautious, but if one does not look carefully at this subtle and dangerous point, he may generate within himself the doubtful mind of the fox, question his own ability, and never reach that marvelous technique into which not even a hair may enter. Thus, there may be defeat in the place of victory, or victory in the place of defeat. But by making efforts in the place of this uncertain defeat, one may understand that which is a natural victory.

A natural victory is striking at your opponent's break in attention or rhythm.[29] When a hawk takes a smaller bird, it strikes at that opportune moment, and sword technique is just like this. If you do not strike at that moment, though you win, it will not be a true victory. If you do strike at that moment, there will be no doubt of victory in a hundred battles.

Abandon the good, and exert yourself in evil; doing so, you will come to understand the good. In the same way, abandon our style, return to the fundamental beginner's mind, and do so with diligence.

Similarly, there is a principle that, in trying not to leave your mind [in an action], you are, in fact, leaving it there. But this is the mind that returns. For example, if you pour water into a tea bowl, toss it out quickly, but then look back inside the bowl, there will be a drop of water remaining. It returned because you tossed it out quickly. For this reason, it is essential in our style to finish something without regret.

The above is merely the beginning of the thread, the tip of the deepest and fullest significance of our style. If you will polish this to the very end, you should reach the point where it is just like an edgeless gem.

The Secret Technique of the Carpenter's Plane

In the use of the carpenter's plane, there is rough planing, medium planing, and fine or superior planing.

In the practice of these three different levels, there is first rough planing, in which the carpenter hardens his body, tightens his belly, steadies himself, puts his strength into both hands, and planes in a rough manner. In the end, if he does not put his entire strength into his work, if he is not willing to spare no pains and toil with everything he has, he will be unable to achieve rough planing.

The next level is medium planing, which will not be successful simply by putting one's entire strength into the job. This level is achieved by naturally adjusting one's hands, shaving the wood in an even manner, and finishing the fine touches. Nevertheless, if the spirit of fine planing is absent here, this medium planing will not go smoothly.

To reach the level of fine or superior planing, above and beyond the smoothness of medium planing, the carpenter must shave the wood in a way that leaves no unevenness or irregularity.

Now, when working on a single pillar, the carpenter must use one plane from beginning to end. And, in using one plane from beginning to end, ordering his mind is of prime importance. When his mind is not ordered, there will be a number of unpleasant effects; and if there are uneven places on the wood, it will not be a finished work. These are the essentials of using a carpenter's plane.

In this way, mind, body, and technique must be prepared beforehand. And this mind, body, and technique mean the plane, the man, and the pillar. If you think that the man does the planing, you ignore the tool; if you think the plane does the work, you are leaving out the pillar. Thus, saying that the carpenter must be prepared with mind, body, and technique means that the plane, the man, and the pillar each have their own function, and that if he is not possessed of all three, he may practice the carpenter's craft forever but still be unable to plane a pillar well.

To plane a pillar well, it is first in this practice to plane it roughly. When this is done properly, you go on to medium and fine planing.

There is, however, a secret technique to fine planing, but that technique is not something separate from what is written above. It is simply forgetting about mind, body, and technique, and just moving along smoothly. In this way, you will have a finished work, and not thinking about the plane of that finished work is a hidden technique with an interesting taste beyond words.

If you are not able to study and grasp this, anything you do will be for nought. And if you do not grasp the skill of fine planing on your own, no one can transmit it to you, no matter how much thought you put into it.

Afterword

本立而道生
When the foundation is established, the Way is born.
—*Analects 1.1*

In the first exercise of the art of iaido, or the drawing of the sword, the student sits motionless on the dojo floor, his calves tucked underneath his thighs, in the formal posture called *seiza*. His outward gaze is directed at the imaginary opponent in front of him, but his inward gaze is seated in his concentration and repose. Hands are placed palm down about midway on his thighs, which are about four inches apart. Without changing his gaze, he grasps the scabbard with his left hand and rotates the blade side of the sword away from his waist. As his right hand moves across his lap and grasps the handle of the sword, his thighs move together, he begins to rise, and his toes pull up against the floor. Drawing the blade from the scabbard, he makes a quick single cut across the opponent's throat, only stopping the movement with the tip of the sword directly in front of him. Simultaneously, his right foot moves forward with a resolute stamp, giving balance and solidity to his entire frame. He then continues pulling the blade horizontally to his right, and when it is aligned with his shoulder, turns the edge of the blade to face forward.

Now moving his right hand behind his head, with the sword parallel with his spine, he grasps the lower half of the hilt with his left hand, brings the sword down in front of him with a circular cut, and stamps again with his right foot. Stepping forward with his left foot, he rises and simultaneously brings the hilt of the sword to his hairline, the point of the sword overhead but pointing slightly to the rear in the position known as jodan. The left foot then slides back, the point of the sword is brought down slowly until the tip is parallel with the practitioner's sternum. The sword is now turned so that the point faces the floor, the thumb and index finger of the right hand cradling the hilt just below the chin, and the left hand is placed on the scabbard near the mouth. As the right foot moves back, the sword is swung quickly around the crown of the student's head and down to the right—this to shake off the blood

from the blade. The left foot now moves back again; the tip of the sword is brought to the mouth of the scabbard. As the sword is entered halfway into the scabbard, the left knee is brought nearly to the floor.

The student then moves slowly back into the seiza position, simultaneously completing the sheathing of the blade. This done, his left hand is held against the scabbard while his right hand moves forward across the top of the hilt, around the end, and then back underneath. Both hands then move back to the top of the thighs, and the exercise is finished.

As the student performs the exercise, the sensei watches, carefully noting not only the precision of the moves but also the student's breathing, posture, and the gaze of the eyes.

This exercise is repeated over and over, for weeks, months, and perhaps years until it has become a part of the student himself. It is performed with a sense of dignity, mindfulness, and grace, which should also be reflected in the student as he progresses in his practice. If pursued as a meditation, he may someday attain Takuan's level of swordsmanship "where heaven and earth have not yet divided," or Musashi's Emptiness in which "exists Good but no Evil." Or he may find that the sword in his hand is not an instrument of death at all, but Munenori's Life-Giving Sword. Thus, what begins with action advances toward personal, and perhaps even spiritual, development.

花は心
種は熊

The flower is the mind;
The seed is technique.

Notes

Preface

1. There are laws in all fifty states prohibiting the carrying of samurai swords.
2. Bushu: Modern Tokyo-to, Kanagawa Pref. and Saitama Prefecture.
3. Soshu: Modern Chiba Prefecture.
4. The techniques that Jion learned at Mount Kurama are called the Okuyama (Deep Mountain) Nen-ryu, while those passed on to him at Kamakura are called the Kamakura Nen-ryu. Neither is well understood.
5. Shinshu: Modern Nagano Prefecture. A shrine to Jion still stands in Namiai, and is visited by martial artists from all over the world.
6. A slender volume in this translator's library, *Kengo: sono ryuha to meito,* provides a list of some thirty-seven founders of major styles of kenjutsu (剣術), or sword technique, and eleven founders of major styles of iai (居合), the drawing of the sword from its sheath and simultaneously cutting the opponent.
7. This difficulty of, or perhaps reluctance to put concepts of swordsmanship into words has had a long history. Consider this by the legendary sword master Kiichi Hogen, who lived during the twelfth century:

> If the opponent comes, then greet him; if he goes, then send him off. To five add five and make ten; to two add eight and make ten. Judge the situation, know the heart; the great is beyond ten feet square, the small enters the tiniest atom. The action may be fierce, but when facing what is in front of you, do not move the mind.

More recently in the last century, we have the founder of aikido, Ueshiba Morihei, speaking of golden rain coming up from the ground, and speaking in words that no one has yet to understand. Both of these men were great martial artists, and their expertise and sincerity cannot be doubted. But what they had come to understand was, clearly, not so easily communicated in words.

Introduction

1. The man who has arrived. In this case, the expert.
2. Yellow Springs: the land of the dead. Hades.
3. 兵法 can be pronounced either heiho or hyoho, but the meaning is the same.
4. It should be noted, however, that both Munenori and Musashi will have been very familiar with the fifth century B.C.E. Chinese classic on warfare, the *Sun Tzu,* in which the term *hei* is used to mean war, warfare, or troops. The most famous line of this work was lost on neither man:

   兵者詭道也
   Warfare is the Way of Deception

5. *Nihongi*, trans. by W. G. Aston. North Clarendon, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1972, pg. 115.
6. This was the style of Sasaki Kojiro, who was famously defeated by Miyamoto Musashi in an epic match on Ganryu Island in 1612.
7. Hogen's sayings are often enigmatic, to say the least. Here is an example.

   > If the opponent comes, then greet him; if he goes, then send him off. To five add five and make ten; to two add eight and make ten. By this you create harmony. Judge the situation, know the heart. The great is beyond ten feet square, the small enters the tiniest atom. The action may be fierce, but when facing what is in front of you, do not move the mind.

8. The school destroyed by the twenty-one-year-old Musashi in 1604.
9. According to tradition, the Three Imperial Regalia of Japan were presented to the first emperor, Jimmu Tenno upon his ascension to the throne in 660 B.C.E. Originally brought to Japan by Ninigi no mikoto, the grandson of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu no mikoto, the Regalia have been presented to a newly enthroned emperor ever since as symbols of his divinity.

   The Three Imperial Regalia are as follows: the magatama, a mysterious comma-shaped jewel, thought to be patterned after either a wild boar's tooth or a fetus—both symbols of intense energy and life; a polished bronze mirror, which both attracts light and (devoid of any human mental constructs) shows reality for what it is; and a sword, the edge of which can be an arbiter of life and death—the thin, almost non-existent line between this world and the other.

All three of the Regalia are considered to hold magical properties, being objects that have the power to induce the spirits to manifest themselves to us; and although this anthology is concerned only with the sword and its use, it may perhaps be wise not to forget its association with spiritual power and the liminal world in which it and its possessor exists.

10. Although heavily influenced by Confucianism in its day-today policies, its overall view was more in tune with the Taoist ideal of a static society:

> Though they have boats and drawn carriages, there will be no occasion to ride in them.
> Though armor and weapons be at hand, there will be no occasion to set them out in martial display.
> Have the people return to the custom of knotting cords and putting them to use [to record events, agreements in bartering, etc.]
> Let them find their clothing attractive.
> Let them find their homes peaceful.
> Let them take pleasure in their long-continued customs.
> In this way, neighboring provinces may be within sight of each other,
> But while the cries of the roosters and dogs may be heard in the other,
> The people will reach old age and turn to dust
> And never travel back and forth.
>
> —*Tao Te Ching,* verse 80

11. Kwatz! (or Katsu): A meaningless word often shouted by a Zen master at the moment he feels his disciple's mind may be opened, or in this case, shouted by the disciple to indicate that he has been "liberated."
12. Fudo Myōō: An avatar of the Buddha Mahavairocana, the Central Sun Buddha. With a fierce look on his face, in his right hand he holds up the sword that cuts through our ignorance, in his left he grasps the ropes to tie up our passions. Fudo is revered by Buddhists of many sects (including the Zen sect), and is sometimes seen depicted either by his image or his sacred Sanskrit syllable on the blades of samurai swords. He is associated with waterfalls, and the free flow of their currents.
13. The word for "spirit" (神) might also be translated as "nerves."
14. There is a school of swordsmanship, the Mujushin-ryu, that was founded in the late sixteenth century by Hariya Sekiun. In this style, skill is considered far less important than spiritual training, as

technique naturally follows enlightenment. See *Zen and Japanese Culture*, pgs. 168–182.

Chapter 1: Ito Ittosai Kagehisa

1. Techniques and principles (事理): these two terms, *ji* (or *waza*) and *ri,* appear as basic concepts in almost all Oriental philosophies, but they change in nuance according to the various thought systems. In Zen Buddhism, which seems to have heavily influenced Ito Ittosai's style, *ji* means matter, physical action, phenomena, or, in this case, technique, contrasted with *ri*, which means fundamental principle or underlying universal law. According to Soothill (*A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1970), they are phenomena and noumena, relative and absolute, external activity and fundamental essence, practice and principle, wave and ocean. One cannot exist without the other, for a true action must be founded on universal principle, and principle can only be expressed by some physical action.
2. Content and emptiness (実虚): *jitsu* and *kyo*. *Jitsu* is defined as truth, reality, substance, or essence; *kyo* is emptiness, void, untruth, or, importantly, as unguarded moment. In *jitsu* is content; in *kyo*, there is either a falsehood or simply nothing there.
3. No-shape (無形): *mukei*. Without shape or form. Something with *kei* has a specific mark or appearance. *Mukei* has none at all. Thus, it cannot be truly perceived.
4. Presence (威): authority, power, aura, bearing, the unmoving manifestation of *seme,* or "attack."
5. Force (勢): *ikioi*. Spirit, energy, force, power, the moving aspect of *seme*, or attack. In Japanese, the word *ikioi* is connected etymologically with *iki*, the word for breath.
6. Non-fabrication (無為): This is from the fifth-century B.C.E. Chinese work *Tao Te Ching* and is a part of the larger phrase 為無為 (Chinese: *wei wu wei*); literally, "to do without doing" or "to act without acting," but really meaning to act naturally without any fabrication at all. It is to act spontaneously, according to one's innate nature and in total harmony with the environment.
7. Reflection (移り): *utsuri*. To transfer, change, soak into, be infected by. To move.
8. Holding the mind (捧心): *houshin*.
9. Arrival (着): *chaku*.
10. To Reflect (写す): *utsusu*. To copy, reflect, reproduce.
11. No-Mind (無心): *mushin*. This is the true Mind free from illusion or concepts; the Mind that is not taken by particulars, but reflects them like a mirror.

12. Without thinking (無念): *munen*. Not effected by illusory thoughts. *Nen* indicates what is on the mind right now, a distraction from what is real. *Muso* (無想) also means "without thoughts or cerebration." The character *so* indicates a mind dealing with the aspects of the world and thus not totally free.
13. "After a long time, interior and exterior will naturally become one. Like a deaf-mute who has a dream, you alone will be able to authorize this self-knowledge." From *Mumonkan* (無門関), case 1. The *Mumonkan* (in Chinese, *Wumenkuan*) is one of the most popular collections of Zen koans. It was compiled and published in 1229 by the Chinese monk Mumon, and was brought to Japan in 1254.
14. Total concentration. "The universe as one mind." See Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*.
15. Substance (実): *jitsu*. This also means truth or content.
16. Emptiness (虚): *kyo*. Also defined as untruth, falsity, or, unpreparedness.
17. Remaining, yet Not Remaining (残不残). This is presumably related to the technique of *zanshin* (残心), where the practitioner pays careful attention to his opponent, even though it would appear that he has beaten him. His mind "remains" on his opponent.
18. *Ma* (間). The distance, both temporal and spatial, between opponents.
19. Taken (止). Literally, "stopped." This means something to the affect that his attention is arrested.
20. No Principle and No Technique (無理無事). This phrase has a very different meaning in vernacular and even Zen usage, but the writer has used it in the terms of his own style of swordsmanship.
21. No twisted thoughts (思無邪). This is a reference to Confucius's quote in the *Analects* (2.2), "The *Book of Odes* can be summarized in one phrase: 'No twisted thoughts.'" The word "twisted" (邪), was the name of a river in ancient China and came to mean "wrong" or "heretical."
22. A Simple Sword (単刀). The word 単 means "simple," "single," or "mere." It forms one part of the word for *Zen* (禅), which means, literally, "expressing the simple."
23. No-Form, No-Aspect (無形無色).
24. T'ai Kung was a twelfth-century B.C.E. Chinese writer on war, also known as Lu Wang. He is considered to be the author of the *Liu T'ao*.
25. This entire section would seem to be based on verses from the *Tao Te Ching:*

    The Way gives birth to the One,

The One gives birth to the two.
The Two gives birth to the Three,
The Three gives birth to the Ten Thousand Things
—verse 42

Of those who obtained the One along the way in ancient times:
Heaven obtained the One, and became transparent;
Earth obtained the One, and became pacified;
The spirits obtained the One, and were imbued with the essential mystery of things;
The valleys obtained the One, and were filled to the brim;
The Ten thousand Things obtained the One, and sprouted with life;
Lords and kings obtained the One, and divined how to make the world correct.
It was the One that guided them along.
—verse 39

26. A reference to the *Tao Te Ching*:

Everybody understands the beautiful to be "beautiful,"
But this only creates the concept of "ugly";
Everybody understand the good to be "good,"
But this only creates the concept of "bad."
—verse 2

Chapter 2: Takuan Soho

1. Fudo Myo-o, literally, "Immovable Enlightened King" (in Sanskrit, Achala.) One of the Five Wisdom Deities, in Zen Buddhism he is considered to manifest the true nature of all living things.
2. Kannon is a bodhisattva, the Buddhist goddess of mercy (in Sanskrit, Avalokitesvara). Originally depicted as male, in one of the three common forms of representation she has a thousand eyes and a thousand hands.
3. The text here gives the names of the twelve notes of the musical scale used in China and Japan. Going up the scale, they are *ichi-kotsu, tangin, hyōjō shōzetsu, shimomu, sojō, fushō, tsukuseki, ban (dakei), banshiki, shinsen, kamimu.*
4. Bukkoku Kokushi (1256–1316).
5. It should now be clear that "concentrate on" might be used in the text as an alternative to "put the mind." "Concentrate," however, narrows the sense of the author's phrase in the original. Both ideas

should be kept in mind.

6. The *tanden,* a point three finger widths below the navel, is considered by some Taoists to be the proper residing place of the mind. It is very nearly the body's center of gravity and is referred to often in martial arts literature.
7. Seriousness, also translated as "reverence," for the Neo-Confucianists meant an internal attitude of attentiveness and composure applied to efforts in handling affairs. As a desired state of mind, it contains a certain sense of meditation as well. The quotation is from book 6, part 1, chapter 11 of *Mencius*: "Mencius said, 'Human-heartedness is man's mind. Righteousness is man's path. How sad that he abandons that path and does not rely on it; that he loses that mind and does not know to seek it. When a man has lost a cock or a dog, he knows to seek it, but having lost his [proper] mind, he does not know to seek it. The Way of Learning is nothing other than seeking the lost mind.'"
8. The fully indented paragraphs, like this, were composed in a terse Chinese style and are the heart of *Taiaki.* The longer sections in between, originally written in Japanese, are basically exegeses of the Chinese sections.
9. *Personal view* is a Buddhist term signifying an individual view based on the *erroneous* idea that the ego, or personal self, is reality and can perceive things realistically.
10. World Honored One is one of the ten titles of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. The Snowy Mountains are the Himalayas.
11. It is said that when Shakyamuni was born he took seven steps in each of the four directions, pointed his right hand to the heavens, and intoned this phrase.
12. The Four Dignities is a Buddhist term that indicates situations in which one inspires respect by his deportment. The four are representative of all the states in man, which are calculated to number eighty thousand.
13. "Created phenomena" result from the law of Karma; "uncreated" are independent of action, word, or will.
14. A *mara* is a demon; the Sanskrit literally means "robber of life." The reference here is to the Deva Mara, who from his position in the Sixth Heaven obstructs the practice of Buddhism.
15. Kashyapa (Mahakashyapa), foremost in ascetic practices of the ten chief disciples, became the leader of the disciples after the Buddha's death.
16. The text here is unclear. Grammatically, it would seem to equate the example of the "one and the three" with the reference to Shakyamuni and Kashyapa, but this fits neither in terms of the total

meaning nor with the development of the text. The reference to "the one and the three" is probably from the Confucian *Analects* (7.8): "The Master said, 'I do not enlighten those who are not enthusiastic or educate those who are not anxious to learn. I do not repeat myself to those who, when I raise one corner, do not return having raised the other three." The latter part of the sentence is from *Pi yen lu,* a collection of Zen problems, sayings, and stories of the patriarchs: "Raising the one and understanding the other three, distinguishing subtle differences in weight with the unaided eye—these are the ordinary tea and rice of the Buddhist monk."

17. Original Face is the pristine nature of the Mind, as yet unstained by human affairs or intentions.
18. Not relying on the written word and transmission without instruction are two points especially stressed in Zen. They underscore the principle that one is to look into his own nature rather than rely on texts or the teachings of others.
19. Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China, is said to have arrived in that country from India in either 470 or 520 C.E. Ta Chien (637–713), commonly known as Hui Neng, was a pivotal figure in the development of Zen.
20. The Five Houses and Seven Sects are the various sects and subsects of Zen. Daiō Kokushi (1234–1308) was a monk of the Rinzai sect who studied Buddhism in China. Daitō Kokushi (1282–1337) was a follower of Daiō Kokushi who is regarded as the founder of Zen at Daitokuji. Nai Chih Hsü T'ang (1185–1269), also known as Hsü T'ang Chih Yü, was a Chinese monk of Linchi Buddhism.
21. From the *Pi yen lu*: "There is no set way for manifesting this great ability."
22. From the *Cheng tao ko* and possibly the *Hsin hsin ming,* two early treatises on Zen. The sources say, respectively, "Contrary action, orderly action—even heaven does not determine this," and "If you want to obtain its manifestation, do not think of order or contrariness."

Chapter 3: Yagyu Munenori

1. This is a paraphrase of the *Tao Te Ching*, verse 31:

> Fine weapons are instruments of ill omen.
> All things seem to hate them.
> Therefore the man of the Way avoids them. . . .
> Weapons are instruments of ill omen,
> And are not those of the Gentleman.
> He uses them only when it cannot be helped.

He puts tranquility and indifference at the fore,
And does not glorify victory.

2. Takuan, in the *Takuan sho*, understood the Chinese character that is used here, *katsu* (活) as *yomigaeru* (蘇), meaning "re-suscitate" or "revive."
3. The word used here is *ho* (法), which can be variously understood as "law," "method," "art," or "Dharma." It is also one of the two characters used to write "martial art"—*heiho* or *hyoho* (兵法)—however, and this would seem to be the concept Munenori had in mind.
4. Compared to the "large" martial art practiced by army generals in battle.
5. *Taiki taiyo* (大機大用) is a phrase used in Zen Buddhist philosophy that, briefly, means true Function manifested from true Principle. This can only be demonstrated when practice and principle are internalized and at the same time transcended or "forgotten."
6. The phrase here is *shuji shuriken no umu o miru* (手字種利剣 の有無を見る), or "seeing into the existence and non-existence of shuji shuriken":

> *Shuji* refers to meeting your opponent's sword in a cross pattern (*ju* 十) no matter how he may strike; it is a practice done to keep from being struck. It is said that if you meet the opponent's sword in a cross pattern, he will be unable to strike you. *Shuriken* is the underside of his hand [technique]; when you see this underside, you will defeat him. This is called the victory of existence and non-existence. It is said that when you can see the existent in the non-existent, you will win.
> —*Himonshu,* by Yagyu Mitsunori
> (the son of Yagyu Munenori)

7. In other words, to have his disciples know and continue to transmit the real swordsmanship and not have it diluted by making it public.

> Knowing the Hidden Flower: If it is hidden, it becomes a flower. If it is not hidden, it will likely not become a flower. Knowing one's self is the essential flower. In all things, in all Ways, the reason for keeping things secret within the hereditary line is that great performance depends on this secret.
>
> The methods used in the Way of War are an example of this. The schemes, plans, and unexpected methods of a great

general will defeat even a strong enemy. This is because the losing side will be confused by rare principles and be destroyed, is it not? . . .

In all things, in all Ways, there is a principle of victory in combat. Thus, in our hereditary line, we keep some things secret.

—*Fushikaden,* by Zeami Motokiyo
(the classic book on Noh drama)

8. One of the Confucian Four Books. It deals with self-cultivation.
9. *Chichi kakubutsu* (致知格物). The passage in which this appears in the *Great Learning* reads *Yokusei kiisha, senchi kichi, chichi zai kakubutsu* (欲誠其意者、先致其知、致知在 格物): "Those who wish to make their wills sincere, first extend their knowledge. Extending knowledge is in extending it to all things." This is one of the most difficult and most often discussed lines in Confucian philosophy, and any number of scholars have interpreted it differently over the millennia. Munenori here tries his own hand at interpreting it, "extending" it to the martial arts. I have generally followed Kenji Shimada's interpretation in translating the phrase (see *Daigaku chuyo*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1967).
10.

As the beginner knows nothing about either his body posture or the positioning of his sword, his mind does not stop anywhere within him. If a man strikes at him with the sword, he simply meets the attack without anything in mind.

As he studies various things and is taught the diverse ways of how to take a stance, the manner of grasping his sword and where to put his mind, his mind stops in many places. Now if he wants to strike at an opponent, he is extraordinarily discomforted. Later, as days pass and time accumulates, in accordance with his practice, neither the postures of his body nor the ways of grasping the sword are weighed in his mind. His mind simply becomes as it was in the beginning when he knew nothing, and had yet to be taught anything at all. In this, one can see the way in which the beginning is the same as the end.

—*Fudochi Shinmyoroku*

11. Pronounced "ki" in Sino-Japanese. The word can be translated any number of ways—including spirit, mind, soul, and intention—but Munenori's meaning seems to come closest to what we understand as ki or ch'i today through our exposure to kung fu and aikido. The reader, however, should be aware of the other meanings and

nuances.

12.

> Deception is hidden; it is the mind that takes in another.
> —*Tsuki no sho,* by Yagyu Mitsunori

13.

> It is essential that the false becomes truth.
> —*Tsuki no sho*

14. In Sanskrit, *upaya*. The Buddha realized that the Dharma would not be understood on the basis of just one explanation by people with different capacities. Thus he devised various "expedient means" and expounded provisional truths so that all might understand. Each level of truth, however, was designed to lead listeners to the deepest truth of all.
15. No-Sword, or *muto* (無刀): the technique, perfected by Munenori's father, Sekishusai, of clasping the opponent's sword with one's bare hands as it strikes downward.
16. Grasping the Opportunity: *kizen* (機前). The complete Zen phrase is *ki imada hassezaru izen* (機未発以前), which, for Munenori, means roughly, "Establish your initiative even before your opponent's concept has had a chance to develop or move. This will break his spirit and lead your design to fruition." The Chinese character ki (機; note the difference between this and the ki of note 11 above) has been taken to mean a number of things in Chinese and Zen philosophies, and its basic meanings are as broad as "moving power" and "opportunity." Munenori seems to accept both, according to context. Once again, the reader is advised to keep both meanings in mind.
17. "The moving power of Zen": in Japanese, *zenki* (禅機).
18.

> One should carefully observe and know [the opponent's] words, complexion, appearance, pretences, attitudes and habits.
> —*Tsuki no sho*

19.

> To transcend the fundamental first blow is to act on your very first single thought just as it is. This is called taking the victory by the first blow of the first blow [or the initial initiative].
> —*Tsuki no sho*

20. Observing the functions of the opponent's fists as he grasps the

handle of his sword.

21. Observing the pattern of the stretch and fold of the elbows. This fixing of the eyes is used when the opponent has taken up the *jodan* position. In jodan, the upper guard position, the sword is held upward with the fists at the hairline and the sword pointed slightly to the rear. The right elbow is called the "peak" and the left elbow, the "valley."
22. Fixing the eyes between the top of the shoulders and the chest. This is used when the opponent's Two Stars and Peak and Valley are obscured.
23. This is performed to avoid the direct force of an opponent's attack.
24. This seems to have been a way to avoid striking and being struck at the same time. The reason for the reference to the bead tree (*Melia azederach*) is obscure, but it may be an allusion to the "bead tree board," or *sendan no ita* (栴檀の板), a plank set from the shoulders across the chest, protecting the lacing connecting the chest armor to the back.
25. These terms—in Japanese, *tsuke*, *kake*, and *narai*—do not invite anything other than approximate translation. In the text, Munenori has written them in the kana syllabary rather than in Chinese characters, and the words themselves are quite broad in meaning. To make matters even less clear, Munenori offers no other information than the broad discussion that follows. The reader must keep in mind that much of *Heiho kadensho* was a prompt, reminding the student of what he had already learned in sessions with the teacher.
26.

> A turning point in the opponent's mind—whether it be for an advance, a retreat, or a turn—is called a change, or *iro* (色, literally, "color"). It is important to apply yourself to that change. . . . You cannot reach the level of the practice of following change by your own efforts. You must leave things up to your opponent.
>
> —*Himonshu*

27.

> The movement of Two Stars is called Change.
>
> —*Tsuki no sho*

28. Manipulating two eyes: *futatsumetsukai* (二目遣い). A term generally used in Noh drama.
29. Pilfered glance: *chugan* (偸眼). Looking askance, pretending not to look, stealing a look.
30. In Japanese, the three rhythms are *atebyoshi* (当拍子), *tsukebyoshi*

(付拍子), and *koebyoshi* (越拍子). Sekishusai mentioned these to the Noh actor Konparu Shichiro Ujikatsu in the "Illustrated Catalog of the Shinkage-ryu Martial Arts."

31.

It is very undesirable for mind, gesture, and attack to come together at one time.

—*Himonshu*

32.

No-Beat is observing during a strike, observing during an attack, and in any case, observing an observance. It is an action I take to scatter the opponent's mind.

—*Musashino,* by Yagyu Mitsuyoshi

33.

Yelling and swinging your sword in large gestures is called a broad rhythm. . . . A broad rhythm is the heart of an attack. Make it big, but keep the mind light.

—*Tsuki no sho*

34.

Celerity following the action of fixing the eyes is called short rhythm. It is used when your opponent is attacking in small strokes and you cannot take his rhythm. . . . Short rhythm is a fast and detailed mind.

—*Tsuki no sho*

35. An immediate counterblow delivered just as the opponent strikes.
36. Defeating an opponent by advancing three inches inside the points of the two opposing swords.
37. Drawing up close to an opponent's body.
38. Checking the space between the elbows when the opponent is holding his sword in the jodan position.
39. The space between the right and left hands as they grip the sword.
40. The interval between the feet that are farthest forward of the two opponents.
41.

My father said that this is the very height of victory, and the ultimate of the martial arts. All the many practices are for the purpose of reaching this point. If you reach this point, every single practice will no longer exist. . . . If you will put your mind into your opponent, the first one who thinks during the match will win. . . . Do not consider existence or non-existence. Simply the person with the first fast thought

will win with an Initial Initiative. . . . The mind is the foundation of all thoughts, so the mind is initial. The mind is prior. The very first thought is the initial act. Therefore it is the initiating initiative. This is the ultimate. The very first thought is the foundation of all acts.

—*Tsuki no sho*

42.

Look carefully with Manipulating Two Eyes; your opponent should have a preferred location. Flush out that preferred location directly, make your opponent strike, and defeat him.

—*Tsuki no sho*

43. Maintaining total mindfulness regardless of circumstances. To be completely without negligence.

Whether you defeat your opponent, miss your target, or are preparing yourself; whether you retreat or attack . . . always stay mindful and suffer yourself no negligence in keeping your eyes fixed. This is of the first importance.

—*Tsuki no sho*

44. A foot and a half is considered the margin between the tips of the shoulders. Possibly a technique for striking at the opponent's head after missing with a prior stroke.

The distance between the tips of your right and left shoulders is naturally a foot and a half. If your sword misses that area of the body, strike at your opponent's neck with your short sword.

—*Tsuki no sho*

45.

In this practice you strictly pacify your mind as you come within three feet of your opponent. Your state of mind should be such that you can hear the faint sound of wind or the flow of a river.

—*Tsuki no sho*

If your attack is rough, you will surely be defeated.
Scattered flowers
fall on moss
without a sound.
Falling flowers

can be heard
deep in the mountains.
—*Himonshu*

46. See Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* 1.8: “The Way of the Martial Arts is in deception”; in Japanese: *hei wa kido nari* (兵者詭道也).
47.

> The use of the martial arts does not rely on my opponent’s not coming; it relies on the fact that I am waiting for him. It does not rely on my opponent’s not attacking; it relies on my being unassailable.
> —*The Art of War* 8.11

48. That is, your sword.
49. *U* (有), as opposed to *mu* (無), or non-existence. Here it apparently means to watch the opponent’s eyes.

> The entrance to victory, all actions, the mind and harmony are called Existence. In Existence, you do not stop while attacking, you do not stay in one place, and you do not relax. . . . This is one significance of Existence. In everything—attack, retreat, advance, evasion—this is the foundation of the martial arts.
> —*Himonshu*

50.

> Enliven the very depths of the mind: above, Abiding in repose; below, a mental state of Attack that cannot be seen. This is of prime importance.
> —*Himonshu*

51. The two levels are *shoju* (初重) and *goju* (後重). This is an allusion to the two levels of working through koans in Zen Buddhist training. Within the two levels of koans there are six further classifications.
52.

> Though you know all the various practices well, you will not be able to use them until you have expelled the four dispositions of drawing back, retreat, listlessness, and timidity. Treat these four as strong opponents, for it is said that there are no opponents stronger than these four.
> —*Himonshu*

53. *Shonen munen, shochaku muchaku* (渉念無念、渉着無着). Another Zen phrase. Munenori would have learned this vocabulary from his

friend Takuan.

> The occurrence of a single thought or an attachment to something are both sicknesses. The mind of No-Mind arises when you expel attachment. This is the absolute ultimate.
>
> —*Tsuki no sho*

54. *Nen ni wataru* (念に渉る). Literally, "crossing over," or "ferrying across a thought."
55. Munen (無念): No-Thought.
56. Literally, "He answered, saying. . . ." Who this "he" might be is not indicated in the text, but the concepts in these sections are clearly those of Takuan.
57. The word *chaku* (着) presents several choices in translation. I have used both "attachment" and "fixation" for this concept as one or the other English word seemed to better represent the meaning. Buddhism generally considers chaku to be on three different levels: attachment to things, to ideas (including the idea of a "self"), and to Nirvana.
58. This is an allusion to the nineteenth case of the *Mumonkan*. This particular case seems to have been well known to master swordsmen during Munenori's time, and its influence can also be seen in *The Book of Five Rings* by Munenori's great contemporary, Miyamoto Musashi. The case is important enough in the thought of Zen and swordsmanship to be quoted more fully:

> Nansen was asked by Joshu, "What is the Way?" Nansen said, "Your ordinary mind is the Way." Joshu said, "Can you track it down or not?" and Nansen replied, "As soon as you look for it, it departs." Joshu then asked, "If you can't look for it, how will you know that it's the Way?" Nansen said, "The Way is not bound to knowing or not knowing. Knowing is confusion; not knowing is being blindsided. If you truly arrive at the Way of no doubt, it is like a great void or vast vacuity. How can you force this into confirmation or negation?"

The phrase is also quoted in verse 28 of the *Ching-te ch'uanteng lu*—in Japanese, *Keitoku dentoroku* (景徳伝燈録)—records relating the deeds and words of over six hundred Zen masters, compiled in 1004:

> The Way does not use practice. Simply have no blots or stains. How can there be no blots or stains? It is just this: when you have the mind of life and death, when you have

the plan of making something, it is all blots and stains. If you want to encounter the Way directly, the everyday mind is the Way. What we call the everyday mind makes nothing, does not distinguish plus or minus, does not grasp or throw away, finds nothing regular or irregular, and sees no secular or holy.

59.

The Correct Mind manifests itself by extending the mind throughout the body. It is not biased in any one place. When the mind is biased in one place and lacking in another, it is called a one-sided mind. One-sidedness is despicable.

—*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

60. P'ang Yun, or P'ang Chu-shih (740–808), was a Dharma successor to Shih-t'ou and Ma-tsu. He wandered China with his equally clever daughter, visiting famous Zen masters and engaging in "Zen conversations." His sayings are recorded in the *P'ang Chu-shih yu lu* (in Japanese, *Ho shikyo rongo*).

61.

No-Mind is the same as Right Mind. It neither congeals nor fixes itself in one place. It is called No-Mind when the mind has neither discrimination nor thought but wanders about the entire body and extends throughout the entire self.

No-Mind is located nowhere. It is not like wood or stone. Where there is no stopping place, it is called No-Mind. When it stops, there is something in the mind. When there is nothing in the mind, it is called the mind of No-Mind. It is also called No-Mind/No-Thought.

When this No-Mind has been well developed, the mind does not stop with one thing, nor does it lack any one thing. It is like water overflowing and exists within itself. It appears appropriately when facing a time of need.

—*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

62. This according to the Zen sect.

63. Chung-feng (1263–1323) was the Zen priest who converted the Yuan-period emperor Ying-tsung.

64. From Mencius, the great Confucian writer of the fourth century B.C.E.:

This is a saying of Mencius. It means that one should seek out the lost mind and return it to himself. If a dog, cat, or cock has escaped and run off to some other place, one will look for it and return it to his house. Likewise, when the

mind, the master of the body, has gone off on a wicked path, why do we not seek after it and restore it to ourselves?

—*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

65. There is also a saying by Shao K'ang-chieh (a Neo-Confucian philosopher) that goes,

> "It is essential to lose the mind." This is quite different. The general drift is that when the mind is tied down, it tires, and like a cat [on a string] is unable to function as it should. . . . Let it alone to run off wherever it will.
>
> —*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

66. In Confucianism, *kei* (敬) has several different meanings, depending on the context and period in which it is discussed. Other basic meanings are "respect" and "seriousness."

> The meaning of the word "reverence" is in holding the mind in check and not sending it off somewhere, thinking that if one did let it go, it would become confused. At this level there is a tightening up of the mind, and not one iota of negligence is allowed.
>
> —*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

67. *Isshin furan* (一心不乱). One Mind without Confusion.
68. Fudo Myo-o, the Brightness King of Immovable Wisdom. A manifestation of the central cosmic Buddha, Vairocana, and the central image of Takuan's *Fudochi shinmyoroku*.
69. Representing deeds, words, and thoughts.
70. This last section refers to esoteric Buddhism. In this practice, the body becomes the symbol or mudra, the mouth expresses the mystic sound or mantra, and the mind is absorbed in meditation.
71.

> In Buddhism, we also have the mentality of reverence. When a bell called the Bell of Reverence is rung three times, we place our hands together and do obeisance. This attitude of reverence, in which one first intones the name of the Buddha, is synonymous with having "one aim with no distractions" or "one mind without confusion."
>
> —*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

72.

> Chung-feng also said, "Make no provision for retreat." This means to have a mind that will not be altered.

—*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

73. Takuan.
74. These two terms, Great Potential—*daiki* (大機)—and Great Function—*daiyu* (大用) are commonly seen in Chinese philosophy and Buddhist thought, their meanings changing with the period, the individual writer, and the particular school. Some writers prefer not to translate them at all, but rather let the reader infer their meanings from context. This translation attempts to come as close as possible to the meanings suggested by Munenori's text and other related works, but the reader should again keep a broad mind.

    In Zen there is a phrase, "Function follows Potential as swiftly as the wind," or *daiki daiyu hayaki koto kaze no gotoshi* (大機大用疾如風). The *ki* of *daiki* refers to the inner workings of the mind, while the *yu* of *daiyu* refers to the actions that manifest those inner workings.

75. Substance here is 躰 or 体 (both are pronounced "tai"). This is the fundamental character of all things.
76.

    > The mentality of considering that the opponent's changes [literally, colors] issue forth from yourself is first in importance. The mind that follows the opponent's changes will actually be following at his heels. You will defeat him by first having the opponent follow your own changes, and then by following his.
    >
    > —*Himonshu*

77. "Great" in Japanese is *dai* (大). The Bright God is *Daimyojin* (大明神), the Great Incarnation is *Daigongen* (大権現), and the Great Bodhisattva is *Daibosatsu* (大菩薩).
78.

    > Therefore, this is called the doctrine of a "special transmission beyond instruction." This is a doctrine outside the teachings of an instructor, a doctrine that particularly requires self-enlightenment and realization on one's own.
    >
    > —*Taiaki*

79.

    > There is no established rule for manifesting Great Function. Orderly action, contrary action—even Heaven does not determine this. . . . If the Great Function of the law of this special transmission should manifest itself in front of you, it will do so freely, without the existence of any established

rule. And yet it is called the Great Function because it extends in all the ten directions and is missing from no place, not even by the tip of a rabbit's hair. An established rule is a law or regulation, but there are no laws or regulations such as would mold things concerning the manifestation of this Great Function.

—*Taiaki*

80. Munenori is again here using homonyms to overlap meanings. Both potential (機) and ch'i (気) are pronounced "ki" in Sino-Japanese.
81. That is, its location.
82. Manorhata was the twenty-second patriarch of Indian Zen Buddhism, an Indian prince who left his home at the age of thirty to become the disciple and successor of the great Buddhist philosopher Vasubhandu. He lived in western India and the central Asian kingdom of Ferghana and died in 165 C.E. The second stanza of this verse, which he reportedly wrote for a nun, runs:

Follow the current and recognize your nature;
No rejoicing, no sorrow.

Sekishusai used this verse as a note to the concept of shuji shuriken.

83.

My mind shifts with everything it confronts. In the martial arts, we consider all our various workings—upper stance, lower stance, turning the Wheel, advancing in Attack, pulling back in Abiding—as the ten thousand circumstances. Shifting in accordance with the ten thousand circumstances entails not stopping the mind in one place. It entails watching the workings of the opponent, quickly shifting the mind that watches them, watching the opponent changing methods, and again not stopping the mind in the place it is watching, and knowing these changing actions.

—*Shinkage-ryu heisho,* by Yagyu Munenori

84. The original poem is found in the *Shui waka shu*, the third Imperial anthology, compiled between 995 and 998 C.E. by Fujiwara no Kinto. The full poem, written by Shami Mansei (Kusa no Maro) during the eighth century, goes:

To what shall I
compare this world?
The white waves left

by the boat rowed away
in the faint-lit dawn.

There is an untranslatable pun here, as *shiranami*, or "white waves," could also be understood as "unknown," which fits Munenori's meaning well.

85.

> It is not that man's mind has a form that cannot be seen by the eye. It is simply through his actions that his mind is manifested, and the mind that is within his breast is known on the outside. Nevertheless, the mind is manifested in the place to which it has shifted, and the traces of that shifting are undefined and difficult to see.
>
> —*Shinkage-ryu heisho*

86. The wandering poet-priest Saigyo (1119–1190) had arrived at Eguchi, a district in Osaka, when he was caught without shelter during a rainstorm. He asked for lodging at a brothel, but was refused by a prostitute who, according to legend, was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Fugen (in Sanskrit, Samantabhadra), who is known as the personification of meditation and practice. Saigyo's poem ran:

> How difficult I suppose,
> to reject
> This world of ours.
> And yet you begrudge me
> a temporary stay.

87. Lung-chi Shao-hsiu (1529–1588), a Ming-dynasty Buddhist priest.

88. Takuan.

89. It should be noted that *chu* (柱), or pillar, also means "main support" in Japanese as in English. In Buddhism it is thought that our concepts of Existence and Non-Existence are the main supports of our conception of reality, the "reality" to which we are so attached. Both are illusions in an absolute sense.

90.

> Without looking at right and wrong [Existence and Non-Existence], he is able to see right and wrong; without attempting to discriminate, he is able to discriminate well. . . . This means that concerning his martial art, he does not look at it to say, "correct" or "incorrect," but he is able to see which it is. He does not attempt to judge matters, but is able to do so quite well.

—*Taiaki*

91. All the lifelong disciplines that people follow. For example, *kyudo* (the Way of archery), *sado* (the Way of tea), *karate-do* (the Way of karate), *shodo* (the Way of calligraphy), or kendo (the Way of the sword).
92.

> A certain man once said, "No matter where I put my mind, my intentions are held in check in the place where my mind goes, and I lose to my opponent. Because of that, I place my mind just below my navel and do not let it wander. Thus I am able to change according to the actions of my opponent."
>
> This is reasonable. But viewed from the highest standpoint of Buddhism, putting the mind just below the navel and not allowing it to wander is a low level of understanding, not a high one. It is at the level of discipline and training. It is at the level of "reverence."
>
> —*Fudochi shinmyoroku*

Chapter 4: Miyamoto Musashi

1. The word *kage* can mean either "shadow" or "light." Although in the titles of this and the preceding section, *kage* is written in the kana syllabary (かげ), which could denote either meaning, they are distinguished by Chinese characters in their first sentences: 陰, or "shadow," in the preceding section; 影, or "light," in this section. Japanese commentators point out that the former kage cannot be seen, while the latter can.
2. See "The Emptiness Chapter."
3. Head of a rat, neck of a bull" is a common military saying in Japan. It means that you must be both clever and have great courage. Lacking either one of the two may be disastrous
4. Despite this first sentence, Musashi's Emptiness would seem to be the Emptiness of Mahayana Buddhism. The core of the *Heart Sutra,* with which Musashi was undoubtedly acquainted, states that "Form is no other than Emptiness, Emptiness no other than Form; Form is exactly Emptiness, Emptiness exactly Form."

Chapter 5: Iba Zesuiken Hideaki

1. From Yoshida Yutaka, *Budo hidensho* (Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1968), p. 190.
2. One of the stances particular to the Shingyoto style of swordsmanship.

3. In the jodan position, the sword is held with both hands above the head. It is considered to be the most offensive posture in the art of swordsmanship.
4. "Void of all thoughts and concepts," or *mushin* (無心), is the Zen Buddhist ideal state of a mind free of thoughts and feelings. Soothill describes it as the "real immaterial mind free from illusion." In swordsmanship it is the state of mind when there is nothing—no ideas, plans or strategies—between you and the action of your opponent. You are totally free of any mental baggage that would hinder an appropriate response.
5. The "flame" here is the spark from a flintlock or burning rope from a matchlock—two early types of firearms in Japan.
6. Marishiten (in Sanskrit, Marici) was originally the head of the Maruts, the demons of the demons of the storm in Brahmin mythology. In Japan, she became the goddess of war and protector of warriors in the esoteric Buddhist sects of Tendai and Shingon. Marishiten's image was often worn by warriors, especially by archers, and it was believed that the invocation of her name would render one invisible to danger. She is strongly connected with the North Star.
7. The Chinese character that appears in the text (懼) originally meant something eye-poppingly frightening. It later took on the sense of "respect," as you would respect a rattlesnake appearing on the trail.
8. The *Analects* (論語) are one of the basic texts of Confucianism, containing the sayings and deeds of the Sage and his disciples.
9. The *Li Chi* (礼記) is another important Confucian text, dealing with rites and social behavior.

Chapter 6: Issai Chozanshi

1. From Joseph Needham, *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 225–226.
2. From the *Tao Te Ching,* verse 51
3. The Sekiyado fief is located in the ancient province of Shimosa; now divided between Chiba and Ibaraki prefectures.
4. These readings are required of every Confucian scholar. The Four Books are the *Analects*, *The Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Mencius*. The Six Classics are *The Book of Odes*, *The Book of History*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Changes*, *The Rites of Chou*, and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*.
5. In ancient times, earthworms were considered to be able to sing.
6. Here "yellow springs" simply means "underground wells," but traditionally "Yellow Springs" has meant the place we go when we die.

7. P'eng Tsu is known as "the Methuselah of China."
8. According to Japanese folktales, when a cat reaches an advanced age, it turns into a huge monster with the eyes of a cat and the body of a dog, called a *nekomata*. It lives deep in the mountains and devours passersby, usually at night. In section 89 of the twelfth-century classic *Tsurezuregusa*, by Yoshida Kenko, we read, "Deep in the mountains there are creatures called *nekomata* that eat people."
9. From verse 4 of the *Tao Te Ching*: "The Tao . . . dulls sharp edges, unravels entanglements, softens bright lights, and becomes one with the dust" (挫其鋭，解其紛，和其光，同其塵). It is interesting to see other translations of this very germinal phrase of the book. James Legge (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 16, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899) reads it as "We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should attemper [*sic*] our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others." Red Pine, in his translation (*Laotzu's Taoteching,* San Francisco: Mercury House, 1996), gives it a slightly different angle: "dulling our edges, untying our tangles, softening our light, merging our dust."
10. The characters here (動物) together mean "animal," but the literal meaning is "moving thing, or creature."
11. A reference to study of the mind, or mind technique (心術).
12. The Six Arts of the Confucian gentleman are ceremonies, music, archery, carriage-driving, writing, and mathematics.
13. From the *Analects* 3.16: "In archery, we do not consider the target as fundamental. This is because our strengths are not the same. This is the Way of the ancients."
14. From the *Analects* 15.29: "It is man who makes the Way great, not the Way that makes man great."
15. From the *Chuang Tzu*, chapter 7: "The man who has arrived uses his mind like a mirror. He does not chase after things, neither does he invite them."
16. The Chinese character for "soul" (霊) has a number of meanings, including soul, priestess, spirit, ghost, or even a deceased person's memory. It originally indicated priestesses or shamanesses praying for rain, and should not be too closely thought of in our own Western terms.
17. From the *Lieh Tzu,* chapter 1: "The pure and light rise and become Heaven. The muddy and heavy descend and become Earth. The ch'i that comes together in harmony becomes man."
18. When Ch'ao Fu was offered the throne by Yao, he washed his ears in a stream to clean them out. When Hsu Yu heard about this, he led his cow upstream so it would not drink contaminated water.
19. Shoken (勝軒): *Sho* means "victory" or "victorious," while *ken*

usually means “eaves.” Nevertheless, *ken* can also mean “dancing” or “laughter”—both good Taoist subjects—and “being good at” or “making a specialty of,” which seems most likely here. *Ken* is also a homonym with “sword.”

20. From the *Tao Te Ching*, verse 57: “When man makes a great deal of skill and cunning, off-beat ways arise more and more.” Chozanshi’s word “make-believe” also can mean “falsehood.” Both meanings—one directed inwardly, the other outwardly—are appropriate.
21. From the *Tao Te Ching*, verse 8: “The highest good is like water; it benefits the Ten Thousand Things, but does not contend with them.”
22. From the *Mencius*: “Again he asked, ‘What is this broad and expansive ch’i?’ He said, ‘It’s difficult to say. It is extremely great and strong, and because of this it nurtures and does not harm. Thus it fills the space between Heaven and Earth.’”
23. From the *I Ching*, “The Commentaries” (traditionally attributed to Confucius): “Change does not think, it does not act [with intent]. It is serene and does not move. It perceives and thus penetrates everything under Heaven.” Note that “change” (易) can also be read as “easy.”
24. Literally, the original phrase says, “The utensil and the Way are consistent.” The meaning is that the manifest is the utensil, and the spirit within is the Way. *I Ching*, “The Commentaries”: “With form, the ascendant is called the Way, while the descendant is called the utensil.”
25. *Sakui* (作意), intention, is a homonym of *sakui* (作為), artificiality.
26. *Shizen* (自然), translated as “spontaneity” here, literally translates as “of-itself-so,” meaning both the natural world (which includes ourselves) and its internal laws. See discussion of spontaneity in the introduction.
27. *Mushin* (無心) is the Zen Buddhist ideal—a mind without calculations, prejudices, or pre-valuing; literally, “no mind.” It is the mind empty of all artifice, completely open to whatever enters it. It reflects the manifest world like a mirror, without the distortion of ideas of right and wrong, gain and loss, or attraction and repulsion. It is the enlightened mind.
28. This refers to the story in the *Chuang Tzu* of a man who trained gamecocks. He declared that any outward manifestation of energy, ferocity, or reaction to things about them indicated that the cocks were not yet trained to the highest degree. It was only when “you look at them and they resemble cocks made of wood,” that their discipline and training are complete.
29. From the *Chuang Tzu*: Nieh Ch’ueh was trying to question Wang Ni: “Four times he asked him, and four times he simply said, ‘I don’t

know.’”

30. From the *Tao Te Ching*, verse 56: “The one who knows does not speak; the one who speaks does not know.”
31. From the *Tao Te Ching*, verse 14: “Continuous and consistent, it cannot be given a name. It returns again to Nothingness.” *Mubutsu* (無物), traditionally translated as “Nothingness” in Taoist texts, is the great source of everything in the universe. Chozanshi, however, seems to mix its meaning with the Zen Buddhist *mu ichi motsu* (無一物), meaning that not one thing exists on its own, that everything is contingent on other things—Nothingness with a slightly different twist. Thus we should not, and indeed cannot, rely on anything. Rather, we should always return to the boundless source of Nothingness.
32. From the *I Ching*, “The Commentaries”: “The wise and sagacious men of ancient times had the very spirit of the martial and did not kill.”
33. In the *Fudochi shinmyoroku*, the Zen priest Takuan (1573–1645) emphasized that the mind of a swordsman should not be taken (stopped or moved) by anything at all. If it were to be taken, its free flow would be clogged up and the unfettered movement of both body and mind would be arrested.
34. In the *Taiaki*, also by Takuan, we read:

> Presumably, as a martial artist, I do not fight for gain or loss, am not concerned with strength or weakness, and neither advance a step nor retreat a step. The enemy does not see me. I do not see the enemy. Penetrating to a place where Heaven and Earth have not yet divided, where yin and yang have not yet arrived, I quickly and necessarily gain effect.

35. See note 24 above.
36. Referring to a poem by the Zen priest Muso Kokushi (1275–1351). The full verse, translated a little differently, runs like this:

> How many times have the green mountains turned to yellow
> The vigorous confusion of this world never ends.
> A speck of dust gets in your eye and the Three Worlds are closed up.
> But if there is nothing in your mind, all about you is broad and wide.

37. From the *Analects* 5.26: “A great army can be robbed of its general, but even a common man cannot be robbed of his will.”
38. *Ishin denshin* (以心伝心): a Zen Buddhist phrase meaning that the

transmission of the enlightened mind does not rely upon words or texts. In *The Bloodstream Sermon*, Bodhidharma states, "In the arising of the Three Worlds, they all return to the One Mind. Both Buddhas in the past and Buddhas in the future transmit mind with the mind. They do not stand on words."

39. The martial arts, among others.
40. In *The Book of Five Rings*, the great swordsman Miyamoto Musashi states,

> In this Way especially, if you misperceive it or become lost just a little, you will fall into distortion. You will not reach the essence of the martial arts by merely looking at this book. . . . Rather, you should consider these principles as though they were discovered from your own mind, and continually make great efforts to make them a physical part of yourself.

41. *Kensho*: literally, "seeing one's nature." At its deepest, this is making the discovery on one's own that the Buddha-nature is within one's own mind. In Bodhidharma's *Sermon on Awakening to One's Nature*, he states, "Pointing directly at man's mind; see your own nature and become a Buddha. This is a special transmission beyond the scriptures, not standing on words or letters."

Chapter 7: Yamaoka Tesshu

1. Tekisui (1822–1899) was a Zen Buddhist priest at the Tenryuji Temple in Kyoto.
2. *Mu* (無): No, or Nothingness, non-existence. From the first koan of the *Mumonkan*:

> A monk asked Chao-chou, "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?"
>
> Chao-chou responded, "*Mu*."

3. Hiranuma Sanzo (1836–1913) founded the Hiranuma Bank.
4. From the *Lieh Tzu*, chapter 2: "When you gamble for tiles, you are skillful. When you gamble for your belt buckle, you begin to hesitate; and when you gamble for gold, you get confused. Your skill is the same, but you get cautious because you value something outside yourself. When you do this, you become awkward inside."
5. *Muteki* (無敵): literally, "no enemy; no opponent."
6. Koteda Yasusada (1840–1899) served as governor to Shiga, Shimane, and Niigata prefectures, and became a member of the

genro-in, or hall of elders, a privy council to Emperor Meiji, created in 1875 to prepare the new constitution. It was Yasusada who recorded the lectures given by Tesshu that were published under the title of *Bushido*.

7. Tesshu writes *musoken* as 無相剣, meaning "the sword of no aspects or form." This *muso* indicates the absolute truth as having no differentiated ideas. In Buddhism, *so* (相)—*lakshana* in Sanskrit—is considered to be the very basic unit of delusion. Others have written *musoken* as 無想剣, or "the sword of no thought." This indicates the absence of thinking, the state in which the mind is not troubled by discursive ideas, allowing it to perceive things clearly and to react with immediacy.
8. *Muto-ryu* (無刀流): literally, the "no sword style." In his *Fudochi shinmyoroku*, the Zen priest Takuan writes, "If [the practitioner] puts his mind in his opponent's sword, his mind will be taken by that sword. . . . If he puts his mind in his own sword, his mind will be taken by his own sword."
9. "To look into one's own nature and be enlightened in the Way" is represented as 見性悟道. "Looking into one's own nature" (見性), means seeing the true self-nature (the Buddha-nature) with which we are all endowed. "Being enlightened in the Way" (悟道), is to have an intrinsic understanding of the Buddhist Way. This is also referred to as 見性成仏, "looking into one's nature and becoming a Buddha."
10. The last line of this poem is taken from a poem by the Chinese Zen priest Wu-hsueh—in Japanese, Mugaku—(1225–1286), posthumously given the title Bukko Zenji. When the Mongols invaded Sung China, Wu-hsueh's temple was also attacked. As a soldier was about to dispatch him, he recited this poem.

    > In all the universe, nowhere can you place a single stick. For the happy man, the Law of Emptiness is itself empty. The impressive three-foot-long sword of the Mongols: Its heart is a flash of lightning cutting the spring breeze.

    The soldier withdrew without harming him. Wu-hsueh later immigrated to Japan and founded the Enkakuji Temple in Kamakura in 1282.

    Tesshu called his own dojo the Shunpukan (春風館), or the Spring Breeze Hall.
11. The kanji 邪 here can be translated as "wrong," "unjust," "incorrect," "wicked," or even "heretical," but perhaps "twisted" is the best choice here. The kanji was first used for the name of a river in ancient China that twisted and turned and generally made

agriculture difficult along its banks. Thus, while it is often contrasted with 正, or "correct" (etymologically, "knowing when to stop"), it does not exactly have the dualistic connotation that "wrong" or "incorrect" might contain. Confucius famously stated that the first anthology of poems in China contained "no twisted thoughts" (思無邪). Musashi also explained that in his style of swordsmanship, the practitioner twisted the mind of his opponent but did no twisting himself.

12. The "opponent" here is *teki* (敵); literally, "enemy." Tesshu, however, was writing for his students in the martial arts, so the word "opponent" seems more fitting here. In the *Taiaki*, Takuan Soho writes,

> Presumably, as a martial artist, I do not fight for gain or loss, am not concerned with strength or weakness, and neither advance a step nor retreat a step. The enemy does not see me. I do not see the enemy. Penetrating to a place where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where Yin and Yang have not yet divided, I quickly and necessarily take effect.

13. Tesshu is alluding to the famous phrase in the *Kegon Sutra*:

> In the Three Worlds [of past, present and future] there is only One Mind.
> Outside the mind, there is no other thing.
> In Mind, Buddha and sentient beings
> There is no distinction.

14. No-Mind, or *mushin* (無心), is the mind free from illusions, the fundamental mind free from any human constructs, which allows us to act to act spontaneously and appropriately to every condition. It is the mind that stops nowhere and flows without impediment.
15. Mencius (372–289 B.C.E.)—in Chinese, Meng Tzu—was, after Confucius, the most important man in the history of Confucianism. It is often said that he was to Confucius as Paul was to Jesus.
16. See above, note 13.
17. This phrase was the famous dictum of Hui Neng (638–713), the Sixth Zen Patriarch: *honrai mu ichi motsu* (本来無一物). These words were said to have revolutionized Zen Buddhism and have been considered a polestar for Zen monks, philosophers, poets and some martial artists ever since the eighth century.
18. Ito Ittosai (伊藤一刀斎). *Itto* means "one sword."
19. According to Neo-Confucian philosophy, the Great Ultimate (対極) is the beginning and source of all things, and engenders yin and

yang, which in turn give rise to all phenomena.

20. Beginner's mind (発心) can also be translated as the "mind of enlightenment," the original emptiness of our mind, in which all things are born, transformed, and pass away.
21. The "fists" are the hands closed on the handle of his sword.
22. From Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* 3.18:

> Thus it is said that if you know your opponent and know yourself, you will not be on shaky ground in one hundred battles. If you do not know the opponent, but know yourself, you will have one victory for every loss. If you know neither the opponent nor yourself, you will be on shaky ground in every battle you fight.

23. The *Kendo wa-ei jiten* (published in Tokyo by All Japan Kendo in 2000) describes *Kiriotoshi* as, "to use one's *shinogi* (the raised ridge that runs up from the sword guard to the tip of the blade between the blade edge and the opposite ridge) to strike down the opponent's sword from above when the opponent strikes."
24. Where this text uses "harmony," Tesshu uses the word *aiki* (合 気), the meeting together of ch'i; and in his modern Japanese translation of this work, Takano Kiyoshi renders the word as "timing." The context, however, seems to ask for a slightly different nuanced term.
25. *Seigan* (星眼): this term is not clear, but the two characters—star and eye—would seem to indicate a stance in which the sword tip is raised high overhead.
26. *Gedan* is the stance in which the tip of the sword is lowered to the level of the opponent's kneecap or, in certain cases, slightly below that.
27. An alternative rendering here might be "shred the wind."
28. The measurement in the original is *shaku*. One *shaku* equals 0.994 foot.
29. The word rendered here as "break in attention" is 節, pronounced either *fushi* or *setsu*, and it has a number of different meanings. It originally meant the joint of a bamboo, a break between one thing and another. But it has also come to mean activity, opportunity, or even rhythm of a song or dance. Tesshu's original intention for the word is not clear here, and the reader should, perhaps, keep the various meanings in mind.

Bibliography

Works in Japanese

Abe Masato, ed. *Tesshu zuikanroku*. Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai, 2001.

Kaku Kozo. *Miyamoto Musashi Jiten*. Tokyo: Tokyoto shuppan, 2001

Kamiko Tadashi, ed. *Sengoku busho no goroku*. Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1977.

Kono Yoshinori. *Zoho kaitei/Ken no seishinshi/Mujushin kenjutsu no keifu to shiso.* Tokyo: Chikuma shoten, 2009.

Maki Hidehiko. *Kengo: Sono Ryuha to meito*. Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2002.

Sasamori Junzo. *Itto-ryu*. Tokyo: Reirakuto, 1986.

Takano Kiyoshi. *Yamaoka Tesshu Kenzenwa*. Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1971.

Watatani Kiyoshi. *Shin Nippon kengo 100 sen*. Tokyo: Akita shoten, 1990.

Yoshida Yutaka. *Budo hidensho*. Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1968.

Works in Japanese and Chinese

Iriya Yoshitaka et al., eds. *Hekiganroku* (*Pi yen lu*), 3 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992.

Kanaya Osamu, ed. *Rongo* (*Analects*). Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1963.

Shimada Kenji, ed. *Daigaku chuyo*. Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1967.

Takada Shinji and Goto Motomi, eds. *Ekkyo,* vols. 1 and 2. Tokyo: Iwanami bansho, 2004.

Works in English and Asian Languages

Blyth, R.H. *Zen and Zen Classics*, vols. 1 and 2. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1960.

Kendo wa-ei jiten. Tokyo: All Japan Kendo Federation, 2000.

Soothill, William Edward and Louis Hodous, eds. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*. Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1970.

Works in English

Blacker, Carmen. *The Catalpa Bow*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1975.

Friday, Karl F., with Seki Fumitake. *Legacies of the Sword*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
Issai Chozanshi. *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012.
Kiyota Minoru. *The Shambhala Guide to Kendo.* Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995.
Miyamoto Musashi. *The Book of Five Rings*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012.
Shaner, David Edward. *The Bodymind Experience in Japanese Buddhism.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.
Takuan Soho. *The Unfettered Mind*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012.
Yagyu Munenori. *The Life-Giving Sword*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012.
Yumoto, John M. *The Samurai Sword*. North Clarendon, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1958.
Zeami. *The Spirit of Noh*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2013.

Sign up to receive news and special offers from Shambhala Publications.

Or visit us online to sign up at shambhala.com/eshambhala.